University of Alberta

Visual Culture and 9/11: The Making of History

by

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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To the militant, identity is everything.

(Susan Sontag)

It is the same intelligence, whose weapons of annihilation can locate the enemy to the exact second and meter, that labors to preserve the great historical event in fine detail.

(Ernst Jünger)

For P, who read every word.

Abstract

Entitled "Visual Culture and 9/11: The Making of History," the thesis explores a number of ways in which diverse visual media have been mobilized into projects of identification following September 11th, 2001. Each chapter incorporates visual motifs into its structure, a strategy designed to highlight themes of visuality, and the logocentrism under which we continue to operate when we "read" images. In the first chapter, I juxtapose the story of Eric Fischl's infamous sculpture, *Tumbling Woman*, which was banned and condemned as obscene shortly after it was unveiled in Rockefeller Center, alongside photographer Richard Drew's equally notorious image of a man falling to his death from the Trade Center. This chapter serves to introduce several key themes: mourning, memory and history, the identification of a thing as obscene or proper, and the drive to identify the victims. Most importantly, the chapter focuses on the liminal space between life and death, imaged in both sculpture and photograph, as a way to read the horror of the future anterior—the "what will have happened" of history.

In my second chapter, I use several patriotic postcards, produced in the wake of 9/11, in order to interrogate the US administration's obsession with identifying its citizens as either benign or evil. Combining an overview of the Patriot Act with some of Derrida's thoughts on the postcard as a viral object, I have also designed some of my own postcards to further reflect upon surveillance and self-surveillance. The third chapter, "The Face of a Terrorist," uses images of Osama bin Laden which have been

circulating online ever since he was named by Bush as the prime perpetrator. All of the images are hyper-sexualized, and rely upon tropes of primitivism and misogyny in order to signify. My argument here consists in identifying a fundamental fascism at work in both the official and popular imaginings of the terrorist identity.

Finally, I end with a return to mourning by looking at several *New York Times* ads which ran in the months following 9/11. The ads were digitally altered versions of Norman Rockwell paintings, which worked by invoking/producing a sentimental remembrance of an ideal America in earlier days. Using the doctored Rockwells, as well as kitsch items available for sale from Ground Zero vendors, I argue that mourning was transformed by kitsch sentiment into a communitarian vision of Us against Them.

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Making Archives

> *Memory has begun to keep records: delegating the responsibility for remembering to the archive, it deposits its signs as a snake deposits its shed skin....The indiscriminate filling of archives is...the clearest expression yet of the "terroristic" effect of historicized memory.*[1]
>
> –Pierre Nora

Shortly after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, four people in New York developed a plan to exhibit some of the photographs witnesses had taken—to make a visual archive of the event. *Here is New York: A Democracy of Photographs* was the result. Occupying two store fronts on Prince Street in SoHo, the exhibition quickly went online and around the world.[2] In the fall of 2002, SCALO published a book featuring hundreds of images from the gallery and website. Democracy and populism are the exhibition's key concepts, and photographs from "world-famous photographers [hang] alongside pictures by police officers, firemen, businessmen, housewives, schoolteachers, construction workers, and children."[3]

The displays are wholly anonymous; photographs hang unframed, suspended by paper clips in the most minimal setting imaginable. No photographers' names are given and the images are rotated on a regular basis; spectators can never be certain what will be on display from one day to the next. Up until October 15th, 2002, copies of the photographs were also for sale.[4] The exhibition closed a few weeks earlier, on September 29th, 2002, but its popularity while open seems unprecedented. Within the first two months of its opening, more than 3,000 visitors lined up each day to view the display. Right now, the online gallery contains more than 7,500 images, and the organizers are in conversation with several museums interested in forming permanent

archives of the material.

The SoHo site of *Here is New York* concerns itself with remembrance, with history, with preservation and, of course, with photography. But it is also an anti-archive of sorts, its deliberate randomness and mutability operating to emphasize transience and absence, as much as preservation and documentation. Its online twin, organized with a complete set of all images submitted to the organizers, portrays the archive in its more traditional format: photographs are numbered, labeled, and placed into distinct groupings of images with which they are deemed to share content in common.

Undoubtedly for ease of navigation, the website is structured in such a way as to enable an efficient and understandable viewing experience. Once directed to the gallery page, viewers are invited either to request a particular image by number, or else to select an entire category of photographs for viewing. A cascading menu of choices reveals itself with the click of a mouse: WTC Pre-911; Immediate Damage; Collapse, Ground Zero; Firemen, Policemen; Victims; Onlookers; Memorials; Missing…the list goes on.[5] While maintaining the anonymity of the images, the website structures itself thematically, guiding viewers along by means of a different type of naming—an archival naming.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida presents us with a brief etymological history of the word, touching both on its Latin derivations and Greek roots. From the Greek, the resurrection of a term that has occupied Derrida since the beginning: arkhē. The word indicates a "cleavage" from the outset, naming as it does both the origin and the law.[6] Enfolding the ontological within the nomological, the originary tensions

gathered within the arkhē come to account for what Derrida names *archive fever*—the doubled up character of the archive which seeks both to preserve and to destroy. *The archive*, he writes, *always works...against itself.*[7] Like Robert Musil's invisible monument, archives for the preservation of memory are bound up with destruction and forgetting.[8]

Derrida's argument carefully links the drive to preserve—to archive—with the possibility for repetition and memorization, i.e.: the death drive:

> ...if there is no archive without consignation in an *external place* which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains...indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction. Consequence: right on that which permits and conditions archivization, we will never find anything other than that which exposes to destruction...introducing...forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument.[9]

These are not idle speculations; for questions of memory are never simply concerned with the past. Rather, the drive to build archives—public graveyards of contemplation and study—ultimately reflects a concern with the future: "the question of the archive.... [is] the question of the future itself, the question of a response, or a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow."[10] The question of the archive, in other words, is also a question of history-making and of politics.

As Derrida and others have argued, acts of naming and identification always entail an operation of violence. Consequently, archives necessarily constitute

structures of violence, or what Derrida terms the *archiviolithic*. In order for material to be gathered and subjected to identification and consignation, discrete cuts must take place. Preservation is always accompanied by surgical incision. On the *Here is New York* website, one name in particular draws attention to matters of naming, violence and forgetting: Afghanistan. Positioned innocuously between categories for *Cityscape* and *NYC – Post 9/11*, a section named *Afghanistan* resides. What, one might ask, is Afghanistan doing in New York?

Twenty-eight photographs comprise this particular section of the gallery, a mere fraction of the nearly 8,000 images. Unsurprisingly, they picture a country wholly removed from the chaos and terror of the New York-based photographs. From a mass of women in burquas (fig. 1) to highly stylized images of men with guns (figs. 2,3), the pictures evoke a place alternately exotic, barren, brutal, and desolate (figs. 4,5).[11] Framed and projected as another world—an alien world—it is nevertheless a world circumscribed and contained within the borders of a certain New York.

Fig. 1: Women in Burqas. Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. 2: Middle Eastern Man, I
Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. 3: Middle Eastern Man II
Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. 4: Ruined Mosque
Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. 5: Slaughtered Goat
Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Identified and named by the *Here is New York* exhibition, *Afghanistan* is a country whose future is inextricably bound to now-neighboring images of death and destruction in New York, a reality ironically underscored by a photograph of a Fox television broadcast featuring President Bush's talking head. Setting off an infinite regression, a vertigo of circularity and refraction of reflections, Bush's image is transmitted from a receiver somewhere in Afghanistan, photographed as the focal point in a living room somewhere in Afghanistan, and projected within another Afghanistan constructed by four New Yorkers (fig. 6). Constituting a moment of arrest, what Jean-Luc Nancy has termed the "interruption" of myth, this image of President Bush speaking on a FOX broadcast to an audience in Afghanistan, and mapped on to the geography of New York, draws attention to the degree to which *Afghanistan* has been re-made from the conflagration in New York.

Prior to Bush's naming of Afghanistan as the home of Osama bin Laden in October, 2001, few people in the West gave it much thought. But once bin Laden became a household name, the conflation of the enemy without a nation with the nation of Afghanistan took place with remarkable and deadly ease:

> Not only were the victims quickly nationalized, but also the new enemy. It was a short and fast jump from the suspicion surrounding ex-Saudi citizen Osama bin Laden and the multinational network of Al Qaeda, to the demonization of the quite demonizable Taliban, to the projection of Afghanistan in the crosshairs of war.[12]

The watching public are shown Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden as though there were no disconnect—no matter of a civilian population already war-exhausted from ten years of conflict with Russia, not to mention its own civil war; no point in exploring the more obvious links between terrorism and nations like Saudi Arabia; and no questions of how these militants became so powerful in the first place.[13]

Re-framed and re-located, *Afghanistan* comes to us now as a visual construct of an exotic and primitive place in the dangerous Middle East; a place ambiguously linked with September 11th, 2001. As interruption, the photograph—a frozen image of a broadcast program—fixes our gaze on these aporias of transmission, framing, and cutting. And from the least expected persona—the commander in chief of his own brand of terrorism—comes a vivid illustration of irony and violence, unsettling the records and disrupting the reduction of Afghanistan into an archived category.

But the location of Afghanistan within New York reiterates what I will address more thoroughly in the body of this work regarding surveillance and identification: the dissolution of discrete and stable borders between self and other, or, in President Bush's terms, between Us and Them. Afghanistan is given (at least) a double identity: the dangerous and alien country far away from civilization, and, the Other we in the West internalize—incorporate—in order to make sense of our grief, and to re-direct our energies from lost loves to new objects of desire.

Archiving 9/11

With respect to September 11th, 2001, the question of the *visual* archive is especially significant. Artist Damien Hirst asserted that the attacks were designed to be viewed: "The thing about 9/11 is that it's kind of an artwork in its own right. It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact. It was devised visually."[14] Within one year of the terrorist attacks, we were told that September 11th had become "the most documented event in human history."[15] David Levi Strauss reports that "On September 11th, more people clicked on documentary news photographs than on pornography for the first (and only) time in the history of the Internet."[16] In Canada, we were inundated for weeks by images of the collapsing towers, New Yorkers running scared, and the sight of families affixing *Missing* posters to buildings and postboxes all over the city, while rescue crews disappeared into the rubble of Ground Zero. Seeing, in this case, became a kind of repetition compulsion the likes of which Freud describes in his studies of trauma and hysteria.

But even in those early days, many critics understood that this massive influx of images only constituted a part of the story. Foreign media reported on organized censorship in New York, while other writers commented on the overwhelming international aporias in this seemingly infinite visual archive. Shortly after the campaign in Afghanistan began, Geoffrey Batchen wrote:

> As I write this, in October, 2001, the U.S. is killing and injuring Afghan civilians on a daily basis, having apparently learnt nothing

> from September 11. Far from here, American terrorism engages in mortal combat with its offspring, sewing the seeds of the next generation of embittered martyrs. No photography of that yet, none anyway that grabs the moment and sears the eyeball.[17]

Exemplifying Derrida's concept of the archiviolithic, the visual record of September 11th is characterized at once by repetition and exclusion.

And yet, the story of this archive cannot be reduced to a mere analysis in terms of presence and absence, where presence indicates the infinite visual representations of the U.S. under attack, and absence designates the excluded Others of Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and all the other holding bays around the world.[18] Not only are we aware of these absences—meaning they cannot be conceived as pure absences or exteriorities whose ghostly life we trace out between our pixellated presences—but we have also been exposed to alternate representations of these Others. The examples drawn from the *Here is New York* archive present relatively tame images of these Others. In the latter half of this project, I undertake an examination of far less "benign" visual constructions in order to interrogate the discursive concept of "the evil terrorist."

Methodology

> *In any war story, but especially a true one, it's difficult to separate what happened from what seemed to happen. What seems to happen becomes its own happening and has to be told that way. The angles of vision are skewed.*[19]
>
> –Tim O'Brien

As a whole, this project combines the concepts of archive and montage. My intention here is to resist presenting the reader with a neatly linear narrative of text and images which presume to account for the whole story of September 11th. Re-stating Walter Benjamin's discussion of the dialectics of the image, Jonathan Crary argues that "what determines vision at any given historical moment is not some deep structure, economic base or worldview, but rather the functioning of a collective assemblage of disparate parts on a single social surface."[20] This work is my surface; its form and content are assembled in such a fashion as to encourage an active connection between reading and seeing, whereby the borders between text and image lose their clarity and we begin to conceive of seeing as reading and vice versa. Far from attempting to resolve the tensions of logocentrism here, I wish to highlight the shuttling back and forth—the fort/da movements—between the typically polarized terms of text and image.

Just as the reading of a text is never comprehensive, I believe Roland Barthes' assertion that the meaning of an image can never be totalized.[21] The assemblage-quality of this present work reflects this impossibility. More importantly, it draws attention to the work as a kind of anti-archive; a micro-version of selections and exclusions which do not purport to present either the whole story, or the true story.

Instead, this archive pulls at some of the common threads, stemming from diverse sources, in order to examine the ways in which images have been mobilized to serve discursive functions in the writing of terrorism's history.

In the first chapter, "Falling Bodies," I juxtapose two aesthetic productions—a sculpture and a photograph, both of which were officially censored—in order to meditate on mourning, memory, and the impossible identification of the dead. The second chapter, "Postcard Memories," picks up on the concept of identification and combines it with a discussion of surveillance and patriotism. This section begins by addressing the question which comprises the bulk of the remaining discussion: How to identify an enemy? In the third chapter, "The Face of a Terrorist," I examine visual constructions of the enemy terrorist as the primitive obscene Other of the U.S. And in my final chapter, "Putting Mourning to Work: Sentimental Sadism," I combine discussions of mourning, kitsch, and sentimentality in order to examine the perverse transformation of grief into patriotic nationalism.

Linking all of these essays together is my concern with the writing of history. Michel de Certeau tells us that history makes a place for the dead so that the living can continue. History, he says, gives us a sense of something which must be done; an obligation to remember, a duty to fulfill.[22] But history, as writers from Nietzsche, to Benjamin, to Foucault have told us, is representation masquerading as truth. Far from being the honorific discovery and revelation of origins, causes, and effects, history emerges from dispersal, dissension, violence, and battles for power.[23] As Jean-Luc Nancy writes:

> The historian's work—which is never a work of memory—is a work of representation in many senses, but it is representation with respect to something that is not representable, and that is history itself. History is unrepresentable, not in the sense that it would be some presence hidden behind the representations, but because it is the *coming* into presence, as event.

My purpose in writing this work is to interrogate the writing of this visual history of terrorism, as it has been articulated by the US administration, and the American mainstream media since the day which has come to be known as *9/11*—to foreground that the unrepresentability of the event has been seized upon by politicians, image-makers, and so-called average citizens, and transformed into a picture claiming to make sense of an ultimately incomprehensible story. The narrative which follows does not purport to make sense of September 11th, 2001. Rather, it functions as a minute interruption of those discourses which claim to be telling the truth about terrorism.

Fig. 6: President Bush on FOX Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

[1] Nora, Pierre. "General Introduction: Between Memory and History." *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions.* Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia UP, 1996. 8,10.

[2] Visit the site at: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

[3] Taken from the website: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

[4] Interestingly, however, Michael Shulan, one of the exhibition organizers writes that "these are not pictures to hang on the living-room wall or to live with on a daily basis. Rather, they are pictures to put away in an envelope and then pull out periodically, as spurs to memory and resolve" (from the website).

[5] Amidst all of this organized viewing, one option to view the entire photo gallery, arranged arbitrarily by number, does exist.

[6] "We have *there* two orders of order: *sequential* and *jussive*. From this point on, a series of cleavages will incessantly divide every atom of our lexicon" (*Archive Fever*, 1).

[7] Ibid., 12.

[8] I discuss Musil in "Falling Bodies."

[9] Ibid., 11-12.

[10] Ibid., 36. On the reference to archive as graveyard: in Derrida's linkage of *archive* with the Latin *arca* (chest), he names other possible translations for *arca*: cupboard, coffin, prison cell, cistern, or reservoir (23).

[11] All images in this Introduction are taken from http://www.hereisnewyork.org

[12] Smith, 99-100.

[13] Roy provides a brief history detailing the CIA's involvement with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) group. From 1979 onwards, the CIA, through the ISI, "funded and recruited almost 100,000 radical mojahedin from 40 Islamic countries as soldiers for America's proxy war [against the Soviets and communism]." Although the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the civil war continued. Despite the CIA's continued funding,

> the overheads had become immense, and more money was needed. The mojahedin ordered the farmers to plant opium as a 'revolutionary tax.' The ISI set up hundreds of heroin laboratories across Afghanistan. Within two years of the CIA's arrival, the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland had become the biggest producer of heroin in the world, and the single biggest source of the heroin on American streets. The annual profits…were ploughed back into training and arming militants. (Ibid)

[14] Allison, "9/11 Wicked but a Work of Art," 11 September, 2002.

[15] Kenneth Jackson, from the *New York Historical Society*, cited in *The New York Times*, 11 September, 2002.

[16] Levis Strauss, *Between the Eyes*, 184.

[17] Batchen, "Requiem."

[18] See Judith Butler's article "Guantanamo Limbo" in *The Nation*.

[19] O'Brien, "How to tell a true war story," 78.

[20] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 5.

[21] Barthes writes: "all images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others." ("Rhetoric of the Image," 39)

[22] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 100-102.

[23] See, for example, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," and also his *History of Sexuality Volume I*.

It appeared on the lower concourse of Rockefeller Center in September, 2002 (fig. 1). A woman's body, fixed in bronze, tumbled irrevocably to the ground. Head smacking, legs thrown overhead, arms helpless to protect her from the force of impact, she appeared there in violent stasis. Unlike the others to whom she referred, her body did not shatter, break, or disintegrate. But her impact was nevertheless too much. Too many bodies had already fallen, and so this one, this single bronzed nude fixed in a state of perpetual collision against concrete, was judged too much to bear. Shrouded like so many corpses would have been, had they survived, she was unceremoniously carried off. Unlike the ones who preceded her, the ones of flesh and bone, she was not crushed under several thousand tons of smoldering steel.	He was caught falling…

Nonetheless, she too, like them, has disappeared from public view.

The monument in question was created by Eric Fischl, a New York artist whose pieces are often identified as controversial and graphic. *Tumbling Woman* was displayed alone in Rockefeller Center, her potential for shock perhaps strengthened by her singularity, but she is in fact one of a series of Fischl's five bronze women, all falling similarly to their deaths. Her horrifying singularity thus reproduced and multiplied by an artist seeking to commemorate a day of terror and loss. Five bodies falling, yet only one exhibited, and then removed. Strange mathematics of addition, subtraction, and erasure; an operation producing only the ghostly sense of an absent presence, and uncanny visions of tumbling bodies on the move, without a final resting place.

Upside down. Straight down.

He looks like a gymnast in the middle of a dismount, so perfectly in line is he with his surroundings. Oblivious to anyone or anything else around him, he looks to be expertly negotiating the laws of gravity. *He is*, as Tom Junod writes,

in the clutches of pure physics, accelerating at a rate of 32 feet per second squared. He will soon be traveling at upwards of 150 miles per hour…[49]

It took about ten seconds for each jumper to hit the ground; this eerie photograph isolates a fraction of this time, freezing it for eternity (fig. a).

Shot by *Associated Press* photographer Richard Drew, the image has since been named *Falling Man*. Although he took a sequence of twelve shots, only this one was selected for publication. Of the twelve, *Falling Man*

She is naked. Or else she is nude. This determination is vital, of course, for each term—speaking art-historically now— retains a distinct meaning, and the particular choice of either naked or nude will have determined her interpretive fate before the fact.

Within traditional art historical circles, the determination of a figure as either naked or nude depends upon the tacit acceptance of certain unspoken metaphysical assumptions. Beginning with a summation of earlier arguments on this vexing question, John Berger sketches a preliminary diagram for identification: *Nakedness is a simple state of undress; Nudity is a conventionalized, abstracted form of art.*[1]

Far from settling the matter, Berger writes, this simple dichotomy only generates more confusion. What does it mean to be *simply unclothed*? alone exposed such haunting composure: *That picture just jumped off the screen because of its verticality and symmetry. It just had that look.*[50] The remaining eleven didn't come close.[51]

On September 12th, newspapers around the world published Drew's photograph. In the US, it ran only once. Charged with *turn[ing] tragedy into leering pornography*, newspapers were forced to defend themselves for printing the image.[52] In the face of such overpowering civic opposition, the most effective defense was to give the American public what it wanted: the freedom not to look.[53] Like the video images of the second plane crashing into the tower, which initially saw compulsive play in the first hours following impact, *Falling Man* was pulled out of respect for common decency, and an attempt to protect viewers from any further visual

How do we recognize when a figure is not merely undressed, but laden with conventions and symbolic meaning? The answer, he asserts, lies in the figure's relative transparency of being:

To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become nude.... Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. To be naked is to be without disguise. To be on display is to have the surface of one's own skin, the hairs of one's own body, turned into a disguise....The nude is condemned to never being naked. Nudity is a form of dress.[2]

Nakedness signifies being (being seen, being present, being a self-continuous subject). Nudity, paradoxically, is being so naked that one ceases to be naked; one is cloaked in mystery, and loses the self

trauma.

The comparison to pornography is not idle, particularly given David Levi-Strauss's assertion that *[m]ore people clicked on documentary news photos than on pornography for the first (and only) time in the history of the Internet.*[54] A kind of metonymic substitution took over that day; disaster photographs replaced internet sex shows. Evincing an age-old intimacy between sex and death, the substitution of one for the other is hardly surprising.[55] However, this was no simple replacement; certain images from the death and disaster category were re-identified and re-situated in the other—pornographic—category.[56] The jumpers, as they came to be known, were the primary focus of this moral outcry and pornographic re-identification:

In the most photographed and videotaped day in the history of the world, the

in the process. Recognition is the determinant, and the gaze belongs to the spectator.

The nude is never recognized for itself. Except when it is, thereby becoming a naked-nude, or a nude-naked. This uncanny exception only occurs, according to Berger, when the painter is so overwhelmed with his model that he cannot help but *capture her will and her intentions in the very structure of the image, in the very expression of her body and her face*.[3] In these rare instances, the spectator is denied the power to determine the question of nudity. The viewer sees very well that the model is naked, but realizes she exists as such only for the painter's pleasure.

Summarily excluded from the enjoyment of her pure being, the poor spectator is likewise prevented from seeing her as a nude:

images of people jumping were the only images that became, by consensus, taboo—the only images from which Americans were proud to avert their eyes.[57]

It was not simply the sight of death which was deemed obscene; it was the image of death-on-the-way which became transmogrified into pornography, and secreted away from public view.

Obscenity and pornography concern the improper—that which is deemed unsuitable for public viewing.[58] But the judgment of obscenity does not result in the absolute disappearance of a condemned object; rather, the objectionable *thing* is evicted from so-called mainstream representation, only to emerge in a different venue within the same social system. As Derrida might say: the obscene element functions as an interior exteriority, or an exterior

The painter's vision binds the woman to him so that they become as inseparable as couples in stone. The spectator can witness their relationship—but he can do no more: he is forced to recognize himself as the outsider he is.[4]

In this exceptional equation, at least two things occur: the figure in the painting takes on an identity of negation for the spectator—not this, not that—and the spectator, situated outside a communion of souls, is excluded from this relationship of immediacy.[5]

Uncanny how this confusion of defining characteristics opens out into the territory of insides and outsides, presence and absence. We have entered a morass. Nevertheless, certain clues in Berger's language highlight the presence of a familiar old monster and its linguistic offspring. Whether the determination is naked, nude, or naked-nude, the interiority—paradoxically enabling and eroding discourses of the Proper within a given system of language and law.

In the case of Drew's photograph, a simple Google search resurrects both the image, and the accompanying tale of its disappearance. And yet, something has taken place in the photograph's relocation from broadsheet to internet: the re-definition of the spectator from sympathizing mourner to lewd voyeur.

Rather than finding the image freely offered, interested viewers must search it out alone.[59] A morality of looking is established, and those wishing to witness the particular fate of a significant number of victims are identified as lacking in respect and common decency.[60] Searing the eyes, this light writing of a body immobilized between life and death—a body no longer in a state of self-possession—is relegated

presumption of being as a being-inside, present to itself and to others, self-identical and self-possessed, remains a fundamental and foundational requirement for the posing and pursuit of the question.[6]

The only way through (never out or around, of course, for we are still caught in this net of Being/being), is via the interrogation of the question qua question. Is the figure naked or nude? The *is*, which has been under erasure since before Derrida arrived on the scene, reflects a faith in the question of essences. Asking: *is the work naked or nude?* executes a foreclosure. In the case of *Tumbling Woman*, the foreclosure signifies that the determination of naked or nude deflects any critical investigation of her censure by re-charging the linguistic cycle of being-inside-presence.[7]

Taking Derrida's definition of the

to the category of prurience.[61]

This morality of looking extended to photographers as well, resulting in extraordinary state-sponsored attempts to control the media during the aftermath. While photography did become the most important medium of witness, it was regarded from the outset with unmistakable ambivalence. Mayor Giuliani unsuccessfully attempted absolute prohibition, *declar[ing] photography at the site a criminal offence*.[62] When that decree failed, photographers were either prevented from shooting altogether, or forced to pool their film. Several photographers were stripped of access passes to the scene; some were even arrested.[63]

Don Emmert, the New York photo editor for Agence France-Presse, contends that the organization of Ground Zero was akin to a police state:

bad reader to heart, I resist this question of identification:

...this is the way I name or accuse the fearful reader, the reader in a hurry to be determined, decided upon deciding (in order to annul, in other words to bring back to oneself, one has to wish to know in advance what to expect, one wishes to expect what has happened, one wishes to expect (oneself)). Now, it is bad, and I know no other definition of the bad, it is bad to predestine one's reading, it is always bad to foretell. It is bad, reader, no longer to like retracing one's steps.[8]

I do not know what to expect from her, from this falling woman. Perhaps because she does not finish—elle n'est past finie.[9] Because she is eternally caught in a moment between life and death, I find myself constantly retracing her movements, trying to understand the reactions of horror and outrage that were

We are only allowed to film what they want us to film....Those free to move around are military photographers of the US Navy and those from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), who give the agencies some very nice pictures, but none that showed bodies.[64]

Undoubtedly, the chaos, wreckage, and dangers within the site demanded some degree of organization and control by authorities. Rescue attempts, after all, were underway, and the stability of remaining structures was as yet undetermined. But the confiscation of film, and the enforced pooling of images signals intensive regulation by the state.

Highlighting uncertainties of what we, as spectators from afar, have not seen, the myriad accounts of image-control illuminate a strange paradox which emerged in the immediate

leveled against her presence on a pedestrian walkway in midtown Manhattan.

I think of her as a narrative. She looks like one of Michelangelo's red chalk drawings of the *Libyan Sibyl*—body with the musculature of a man, breasts sculpted almost as an afterthought (fig. 2). Her paradoxical evocation of violent movement recalls earlier productions of sculptural agony, such as Giovanni Bologna's *Rape of the Sabine Women*—a horrifically beautiful piece commemorating a terrible moment in Roman history (fig. 3). Like Bologna's sculpture, *Tumbling Woman* tells her own war story. Her Sibylline features suggesting a narrative not unlike that of Cassandra; its premonitory warnings of insecure foundations and irreducible grief terrible to hear, and impossible to comprehend.[10]

aftermath. Photography was at once the most pervasive and popular form of witness, and an activity regarded with extreme suspicion. Like the perimeter fence which was erected shortly after the collapse of the towers, photographers repeatedly ran up against certain limits in their shooting. One of these limits—identified as the presence or absence of bodies in an image—became a focal point for journalists commenting on the regulation at Ground Zero.

Foreign journalists remarked immediately upon the absence of corpse photographs in documentary images of the attack:

5,500 people died or disappeared on the black day of 11 September…but practically no image of the bodies has been shown on the television or published in the press.[65] While some reporters attributed the lack of corpse photographs

When I see her in photographs, as now I must, I catch myself composing and re-composing the final moments before her fall. I imagine her up there, looking down, so far down at people small and distant while all around her the sounds of walls collapsing, the sight of people paralyzed or panicked, the acrid smells of smoke, fuel, and god knows what else, are so proximate that they begin to take on a quality of hyper-reality, and in so doing, become strangely remote. Time must stop for a moment. I imagine her stepping back. Stepping back from herself in order to make the space she needs to jump. Consequently, when she does leap, she has already left her body. She watches herself do it from afar and barely registers the loss of footing beneath her. She has fallen into a dream from which she will never wake.

But sometimes it doesn't happen

to an inconsistency in American journalistic policy—*western media...don't hesitate to show massacres when they happen in Rwanda*—others merely remarked that:

[d]uring wars you never show your own dead, only those of your adversaries. The Americans want to limit the images of trauma they have suffered, of defeat, the affront and the mortification.[66]

Some further argued that the lack of cadaver photographs resulted directly from the overwhelming absence of dead bodies.

Crushed, incinerated, and turned to ash, very few bodies remained to photograph. As one French correspondent suggested: *I quite honestly doubt that there is much left to show.*[67] Nevertheless, records of images rejected by the filters do exist: *[t]errible pictures started arriving....There was blood, there*

like this. Sometimes she's so confused by the noise and dazed by the smoke that she cannot gather enough of herself together to become absent. She can't breathe. All she can think is that she can't breathe. She looks up and sees the window, already smashed by an earlier jumper, and thinks if she can just get to that air on the other side, she'll be able to think clearly. She stumbles towards the opening and leans out, gasping for relief, when someone inside trips and falls over her legs. She is jolted. Her hands slip. She loses hold of the window and her legs scramble to find concrete, but there is only air. The air she sought for succor has turned into so much wind screaming past her as she falls fast and hard into a nightmare from which she will never wake.

And sometimes, sometimes she is so terrified up there that she wants to

were dismembered bodies. These photographs, present only through their absence, have been almost entirely rejected by newspapers, commemorative anthologies, and even independent internet sites.[68] As Mark Wigley writes, *The few bodies that were found were kept invisible. Despite all the intense and endless media coverage, no bodies were shown. No broken, bloody, burned, or fragmented people.*[69]

Instead, endless photographs of the towers' collapse began to operate metonymically for the absent bodies.[70] Although network executives were responsible for the decision not to reproduce these now-apocryphal images, the exclusion or eradication of these shots from public consciousness was far from a hierarchical operation of censorship from above. Like the jumper photographs which became taboo, the desire not to

jump, but she can't bring herself to do it. She turns to a man crouched beside her, a man she's worked with for years in adjoining cubicles, and asks him to do what she can't…

GRAPHIC I

As a commonplace, the judgment of graphic typically refers to a scene, whether narrative or filmic, deemed somehow excessive, indecent, or unwarranted. The ear scene in *Reservoir Dogs*, the sound of the wood-chipper in *Fargo*, excerpts from de Sade's *Justine*…. That which is deemed too graphic to be seen, and will not be permitted to create a scene, suggests that obscenity is hanging around somewhere close by. Behind the scenes.

Hearken back to an ancient meaning for obscene: ob-scenus, from the Latin, synonymous with "foul," "repulsive," and "filthy." Literally,

witness corpse photographs was widespread amongst both journalists and American citizens. [71]

IDENTIFICATION I

Not all photographs of bodies were excluded. Other photographs—heroic, triumphant, defiant photographs—have been elevated in their stead, deployed in official ceremonies and heralded by government and citizenry alike as examples of American valor, triumph, and courage. [72] Set against all the remarked upon absences of corpse photographs, those bodies which were put on view become especially significant. Images of survivors—ash and debris-covered bodies of the living—abound, and have been anthologized in

however, the word translates as "off stage" or "out of sight." Referring of course to those bloody Greek dramas, famed for never showing the graphic bits onstage; the obscene elements were always just that: obscene—off stage. Violence recounted after the fact for the eager viewer, drinking in bloodlust through narrative. In New York several thousand years later, an ancient trope repeats itself. The monument is too graphic, and the curious are prohibited from seeing her. Except of course through the words of angry journalists.

True to form, and almost too good to be true for purposes of analysis, the various judgments of the "too graphic" *Tumbling Woman*—offensive and inappropriate monument, scandalous "postmodern" art…—all link up and refer back to what Jacques Derrida has carefully traced as the bastard heritage of

every major photographic publication of the event (figs. b, c, d).[73] They are terrified, confused, wounded…but alive.

The body of Father Mychal Judge, a famed New York City fire department chaplain, was photographed as it was carried out of the wreckage (fig. e). Judge died administering last rites to an injured firefighter; he had removed his helmet to perform the ritual. Killed in the line of duty, he brought a face—a known face with a function and purpose—to the disaster scene. His death, while tragic, retains an element of choice—he chose to enter the still smoldering rubble in the hopes of bringing peace to the dying. The image was published to great acclaim all over the US.

But the bodies which have seen by far the most exposure are alive and engaged in purposeful work. They are firemen searching for victims. Official

the graphē, which, according to his analysis, has forever and eternally been too graphic.[11]

As Derrida so eloquently argues, that which is associated with the graphic, is fundamentally associated with the improper—that condition or state of exteriority and distance from truth, self-presence, and Being.. Bataille writes that obscenity is our word for designating a lack of self-possession:

Obscenity is our name for the uneasiness which upsets the physical state associated with self-possession, with the possession of a recognized and stable individuality.[12]

Her lack of a claim on either life or death depicts a state utterly out of the control of the living, either for rescue workers or for embalmers and funeral planners. When charged with obscenity, she is at the same time identified as being improper: not

city workers, trying in vain to recover some hope from the horror, they pause from their task to raise the American flag atop a pile of rubble (fig. f). In this extraordinary photo-op, they are transformed from city functionaries to servants of the nation, bringing a message of triumph and hope to desperate civilians. Shot by Thomas Franklin, photographer for the New Jersey newspaper *The Record*, this image of three firemen hoisting the flag on September 11th stands as an important counterpoint to public responses to the jumper photographs. Selected for its almost perfect recollection of Joe Rosenthal's famed Iwo Jima photograph from World War II (fig. g), the image has been copyrighted, reproduced, sold, re-packaged, and commercialized beyond belief. Snow globes, miniature 3-D replicas, posters, key chain designs: the

equal to the task of sober remainder or reminder of this day. There is both too much and too little of her which remains, left over, after her jump and before her death.

GRAPHIC II

Of course I know she isn't real. She never fell from on high; she was built in a studio, put on display, and then removed under cover of cloth. Censured as unfit; judged "too graphic." Her alleged indecency exposed by the act of enshrouding her like a corpse; marking her at once as something shameful to be concealed, and something dead. Shame and Death, that old pair persistently showing up in representations of archetypal Woman, right on back to the mythic First Woman of the West: Eve. Another woman who fell, albeit from a different kind of grace.

It would be more than facile to

photograph has been reproduced in almost every imaginable way. And in 2002, it became a commemorative postage stamp.

While Friedman's image opens the space for a narrative of hope and triumph through the promise of national resilience and the allusion to past victories in war, Drew's *Falling Man* resists all such linkages with American glory. The jumper is not a proper object for identification: alienated from the national community, he tumbles alone and out of control, death his sole and inevitable fate. Stripped of all options himself, the *Falling Man* leaves behind only one possibility for survivors: a future of mourning.

The charge of obscenity, poor taste, lewdness, voyeurism, etc. in photographic representation must be understood as fundamentally ideological.

stop here; to suggest that the sculpture was judged inappropriate because it depicted a naked woman on her way to death. Nevertheless I must cross and re-cross this ground, for Derrida's bad reader crops up here. In a clandestine, and wholly conventional in the art-historical sense, determination of naked over nude, one journalist in particular paves the way to such a reading:[13]

A violently disturbing sculpture popped up last week in the middle of Rock Center's busy underground concourse – right in front of the ice-skating rink. It depicts a naked woman, limbs flailing, face contorted, at the exact moment her head smacks pavement following her leap from the flaming World Trade Center.[14]

Sly anthropomorphism in the space of one short paragraph, when "a violently disturbing sculpture" is humanized into "a naked woman." This terrible

For in its essence, a photograph *possesses meaning...only in potentia: meaning does not fill the image like water in a glass, but rather, resides in the knowing and decoding activity of the viewer.*[74]

Obscenity or its other—propriety—are superimposed on to an image after the fact; they are narratives generated according to a larger political context. In the case of those body photographs deemed *proper* in the wake of September 11th, narratives of identification are primary. Identification as a way of making sense (*he died in the line of duty*), making hope (*we can avenge this*), making a future for the nation.

Neither body nor survivor, jumper photographs resist identification; they are essentially liminal.[75] Frozen between life and death, Drew's image effects a terrible collapsing of time: always about to die, the jumper is already dead.

transubstantiation not only shocks; it assails.

The bare bronze is accused of attacking her viewers: "IS THIS art? Or assault?"[15] Three separate newspaper headlines over the period of one week respectively christen her: "Shameful," "Sick," and "Tacky."[16] And then she is covered up to protect the unsuspecting from viewing her indecency, like the placement of porn magazines on top shelves of convenience stores.[17]

The same journalist responsible for fueling much of the outrage towards *Tumbling Woman* congratulates herself on its removal, defending her actions in the name of caring protection of the people: *This is not censorship, but sensitivity. No one is banning this piece. But common sense dictates that some works are not appropriate to be thrust in your face, in such a public place as*

I read at the same time: This will be *and* this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What* pricks *me is the discovery of this equivalence.*[76]

Falling Man hurtles eternally towards certain death. Like Tantalus forever reaching, yet never realizing his desire. The obscenity of Drew's image lies in its depiction of an eternally incomplete, yet certain death. The violence, as in ancient Greek drama, was offstage—*ob-scenus*—in a future perpetually on the way. In such a state of deferred arrival, we are left asking: how is mourning possible when death has not yet been accomplished—when the victim is not yet identifiable as dead; when the victim is no longer identifiable?

Mourning, says Freud, is a

Rockefeller Center.[18]

Paternalistic and infantilizing rhetoric of protection: the people need help determining propriety; and the improper, once identified, must be expelled from the center. One journalist's peculiar discourse of common sense and care recapitulating an age-old platonizing impulse for identification and expulsion of the (so-called) vulgar. Protect the community from obscenity; kick it out from inside the center, and resume a fascistic patrol of the perimeter lines around public space.

But as Derrida writes, this desired demarcation of insides from outsides has never been fully realized; the outsides can always be located within the innermost interior of the insides:

The outside, "spatial" and "objective" exteriority which we believe we know as the most familiar thing in the world, as

process of gradual detachment: *its function is to detach the survivors' memories and hopes from the dead.*[77] Unless the survivor regresses into the hysteria of melancholia—*an identification of the ego with the abandoned object*[78]—they will eventually complete the grieving process, and once again be able to form attachments with new love-objects.[79] The resurrection of memory, for Freud, is pivotal to this process:

Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it.[80]

Neutralizing the charge of memory, mourning is conceived as a process to get through; death a thing to get over.

Derrida complicates matters, suggesting that mourning resembles

familiarity itself, would not appear...without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present, without the relationship with death as the concrete structure of the living present.[19]

Absolutely necessary to the vital statistics of the metaphysical system, the so-called outside-improper element must be ritually identified and expelled. At the same time, enough of this element must be retained safely within the system. Remaining under perverse protection as an internal outlaw, its negativity functions as an outline, or supporting frame, which gives to the Proper its shape and meaning. Similarly, *Tumbling Woman* was left inside the (Rockefeller) Center, yet covered up for decency's sake prior to her final expulsion. Highlighting her impropriety while concealing the fine details, this temporary veiled exposure

melancholia more than Freud allows, that true mourning, if such a term can be used, never arrives at completion. What is mourning, after all, if not the preservation of the other within me? *If death comes to the other, and comes to us through the other, then the friend no longer exists except* in *us*, between *us. In himself, by himself, of himself, he is no more, nothing more. He lives only in us.*[81]

But the *he* of whom Derrida speaks—the mourned other—comes to us, in memory, as an image. It is as image that the dead returns and is recognized by us—is identified as the one to be mourned: *When we say "in us," when we speak so easily and so painfully of inside and outside, we are naming space, we are speaking of a visibility of the body, a geometry of gazes, an orientation of perspectives.* We are speaking of images.

suggests another strategy for interrogating her graphic truth.

Bear with me. The dangers signaled by the deployment of this term are legion, but if I can re-trace my steps carefully enough, I will have been able to avoid tumbling into yet another metaphysical void. Truth enters here not in its usual sense, as absolute proximity and self-presence. Rather, the covered-up sculpture performs a visual recapitulation of a much more complex and resistant articulation of truth: the perpetual coupling of revelation with concealment.

This coupling is not a harmonious union; neither unilateral victory, nor conciliatory amalgamation of the dueling parties ever takes place. Truth is a battleground for a war which never ends. Martin Heidegger describes this conflict as an essential and originary condition of

What is only in us *seems to be reducible to images, which might be memories or monuments, but which are reducible in any case to a memory that consists of* visible *scenes that are no longer anything but* images, *since the other of whom they are the images appears only as the one who has disappeared or passed away, as the one who, having passed away, leaves "in us" only images.*[82]

Drew shot a photograph of a man on his way to death. But the image he gave us interrupts as it perpetuates the mourning process.

Like all images, it does not answer the ontological question—*What, or Who is it*?—but its non-answer is literal: it is a photograph of an unknown man; a memento mori without referent.[83] Operating as a photographic tomb to an unknown jumper, the image becomes iconic for all who jumped that day. But

strife: *Concealing denial is intended to denote that opposition in the essence of truth which subsists between clearing and concealing. It is the opposition of the original strife.*[20] Truth is not peaceful, or pure. Nor is it self-continuous or self-consistent with itself.

Operating much like Heidegger's articulation of alētheia—the Greek term for the unconcealing of beings—the act of covering up a sculpture in plain sight illustrates that there is something to see, but that it is veiled and indistinct.[21] This paradoxical condition of hidden presence highlights Heidegger's complex articulation of truth: *Truth, in its essence, is un-truth.*[22] Far from defining truth as its simple opposite—*falsehood*—Heidegger complicates the matter by injecting concealment and dissembling into its very core:

Each being we encounter and which

something is lost in the attribution of iconicity, and that is the specificity of the loss documented by Drew's photograph.

Derrida tells us that mourning and memory are inextricably tied to the proper name:

The name...this is the sole object and sole possibility of memory, and in truth the only "thing" that it can at the same time both name and think. This means then that any name, any nominal function, is "in memory of"—from the first present of its appearance, and finally, is "in virtually-bereaved memory of" even during the life of its bearer.[84]

The image, which never exposes an ontology, here doubles up in its uncanny resistance to name the subject. The work of mourning—for this man, for this day—is permanently disrupted by the impossibility of recognition, the failed identification of a victim. This failure

encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presencing, in that it always withholds itself at the same time in a concealment.[23]

The truth of the matter, as Heidegger argues, is that truth dissembles. Uncloaking this bronze and exposing her to light in order to prove or disprove an essential impropriety will only generate an oroborean narrative in the grand tradition of Art Historical Interpretation. *She is Naked! She is Nude. She is Graphic! She is Art!*...We must avoid making these determinations at all costs, for they destine us to ride the circle line of the metaphysics of presence ad infinitum. The question of correctness of representation, or of properly interpreting the details of Fischl's intentions, is specious.[24] Far better to track the movements of alētheia between the lines of exposure and concealment, cannot be overemphasized, for it is through this failure that the profundity of *Falling Man's* iconicity begins to emerge.

IDENTIFICATION II

The attempt to identify him formally was made. After viewing Drew's photograph, a *Globe and Mail* editor set reporter Peter Cheney the task of uncovering the *Falling Man's* true identity. Taking photography back to its classificatory roots via new technology, Cheney had the image enlarged and enhanced.[85] The information which emerged, uncannily enumerated in the style of criminal description, gave focus to the reporter-detective's quest:

presence and absence. Within these interstitial spaces, a fundamental trembling is detected; its reverberations effectively unsettling the borderlines between life and death.

GRAPHIC III

In her freeze-frame focus between life and death, the *Tumbling Woman* enacts an infernal articulation between absence and presence. This arrested moment or movement between hints at something far more terrible than death; something perpetual and incomplete. It is this point, or caesura, to which I keep returning. She is not yet finished; elle n'est pas encore finie. In this perpetual state of being on the way to death, this falling bronze forces us—her viewers—to return eternally to this moment before finality. Like her, we are never fully able to finish with it all; we cannot mourn a thing which has not yet been identified as

the man was most likely not black but dark-skinned, probably Latino. He wore a goatee. And the white shirt billowing from his black pants was not a shirt but rather appeared to be a tunic of some sort, the kind of jacket a restaurant worker wears.[86]

Despite the clues yielded by this exercise, the only certain facts to emerge from the photograph's enlargement were black high-tops and an orange t-shirt.[87]

Armed with these few details, Cheney studied the list of businesses located in the Towers. He concluded that the *Falling Man* must have been a food service worker, probably employed by the restaurant at the top of the North Tower—*Windows on the World*. One by one, Cheney checked out several leads. Norberto Hernandez, Sean Singh, Wilder Gomez, and Jonathan Briley were among the list of possible candidates.[88] After

dead, a thing which has not yet finished with us.

This is the terrible legacy of the event referred to as *9/11*. The twin work of mourning and the writing of history has been stalled for an indefinite period of time. We write history, according to Michel de Certeau, in order to make the present habitable: *writing makes the dead so that the living can exist elsewhere*. A kind of burial rite, historiography *receives the dead that a social change has produced....*[25] However, this history is not simply concerned with laying the past to rest. Making the present habitable also involves a domestication of the future: bringing the future home to us through a controlled writing of the past. De Certeau describes this operation as producing a sense of *a something which must be done*; and he argues that this belief is fundamental to the daily

talking with various friends and family members, not all of whom wanted to participate in this hunt, he was able to reject all but one name from the list: Jonathan Briley.

Briley fit the profile: his skin colour, height, facial hair, and place of employment—*Windows on the World*—all track with the details gleaned from Drew's image. Moreover, once Cheney interviewed family members, he learned that Briley not only wore black high-tops, pants, and a white shirt to work, he also owned an orange t-shirt, a t-shirt he loved and wore frequently. But nobody saw what Briley wore to work that morning, and his clothing has long since been packed away and discarded.[89]

In the end, Cheney's search turns up nothing but *maybe*. Maybe the *Falling Man* is Briley, but maybe it's someone else. After all, how many

functioning of a Western society.[26]

The recording of facts we do have—planes crashing at 8:46 am and 9:03 am respectively; the number of tons of steel removed from Ground Zero; the number of firemen killed…—has gone a long way to providing this sense of a task to be accomplished. President Bush's government has answered the call, stating the goal as a double-desire for vengeance, and the permanent eradication of global terrorism.[27] The horror of the losses sustained on September 11th cannot be overstated. But the accounting procedures undertaken by the US government and its allies are governed by vague guidelines, given to modifications as necessitated by policy changes in military focus and spending.[28]

Added to the unending accounting practices currently raging overseas, the US continues to deal with its own

orange t-shirts and black high-tops are there in New York? *Falling Man* proves unidentifiable. Despite photography's apparent capacity to resolve identity—it is an AP documentary photograph after all; ostensibly the most objective, most reliable form of evidence we have today—traces are all that remain. All the technology of enlargement and heightened resolution cannot bring us a proper name. We are left with nothing but the ephemera of an orange shirt, black high tops, a white jacket, and dark skin.

All of which goes to show that in the end, a photograph is no substitute for a body. Without a body—the necessary forensic material for the production of a name post-mortem—all that remains of the *Falling Man* is absence and uncertainty. If memory always comes to us as an image, then the memory of

incapacity to tally up the dead in this horribly unique event.[29] How many bodies have never been found, despite all the sifting through ash and debris for DNA evidence at Fresh Kills? We continue to hear of names being removed from the official victim list, since their presence in the towers cannot be confirmed with absolute certainty. The dead are not only not buried; in some cases, they are not even recognized as dead.

But there is even more at stake than an inability to count and name the dead. We can begin to grasp this other horror by looking again at *Tumbling Woman's* singular position in-between; suspended not only between life and death, but also petrified between past, present, and future.

She is not located in a simple past; she does not allow viewers to approach her as Drew's photograph is only one of pure loss: its iconicity achieved at the expense of recognition. Just as his journey towards death remains photographically incomplete, this man is condemned to anonymity; never to be claimed by blood relations. The man in the picture, whoever he is, is mourned as a ghost without a home, without a proper burial. What remains is not the certainty of a body or a name, but only the photograph of a man about to die.

The hunt for his true identity recapitulates an essentially Antigonean quest to claim and bury the lost other.[90] Its failure epitomizes one of the most obscene results of September 11th: survivors and relatives have not yet been able to bury their dead, for their dead do not exist *as such*, but only as so much dust, ash, and debris. Names, in most cases, are all that remain of the victims,

narrating a completed historical event. Convulsing all three of the tenses which we call time into a single frozen moment, she not only forces us to question how we remember that one day, but also exposes an inapprehensible future, with incomprehensible horrors still to come. She is not yet finished dying, and the future between her impact and her death remains open. This is the history we cannot yet begin to imagine.

Consequently, the haunting which has arisen since *9/11* to trouble our minds and our borders is not the (simple) recognition of remains—of absence intertwined with presence—of which Derrida writes in so many of his works on mourning.[30] Coming from the future, this haunting *resists even the grammar of the future anterior*, and indicates that we are not in a position to articulate what will have happened from all this.[31] We

but they remain isolated and detached from the scene of destruction—frozen in time and space like the *Falling Man*. Like Antigone, sentenced to live-burial by the King for her attempts to mourn her brother, surviving relatives of 9/11 are entombed in their own perpetual mourning weeds, left only with names to repeat—names to make it real.

IDENTIFICATION III

It is this obscenity of absence—the absence of remains—which helps to explain the significance ascribed to proper names in officially sanctioned mourning projects. In place of non-existent corpses, names have come to confirm death. At the annual recitation

can begin to illustrate this by referring to two of the military-politico events which have been initiated since that day, and which have not yet seen their conclusion: the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But there is still more, more than can be contained within the borders of the so-called Axis of Evil. Bombings almost every week in every part of the world. Today it was Turkey, last week: Saudi Arabia. Tomorrow? These days, the threat of global, random violence is more accurately thought of as a promise, not a possibility:

What happened, even though this has not been said with the requisite clarity—and for good reason—is that, for the future and for always, the threat that was indicated through these signs might be worse than any other….The threat of a chemical *attack, no doubt, or* bacteriological *attack...but especially the*

of victim names at the Ground Zero commemorative ceremonies, the name of each official victim is read aloud. And, for the 9/11 memorial design competition, entries were required to include:

individual recognition for 2,982 victims: six from the attack in 1993, 224 from the Pentagon and United Flight 93 in Pennsylvania, and 2,752 at the World Trade Center, according to the city's most recent count.[91]

According to the city's most recent count…And the city is counting names, furiously counting them ever since 8:46 am that September morning. Initial tallies indicated the number of dead at over 6,300. Two years after the attacks, the number had dropped significantly, to 2,792. The most recent figure, reported in October, 2003, subtracted another forty names from the list, bringing the official

threat of a nuclear *attack….From now on, the nuclear threat, the "total" threat no longer comes from a state but from anonymous forces that are absolutely unforeseeable and incalculable.*[32] This is the terror alluded to by *Tumbling Woman's* liminal state. Her horror as a monument—an object of commemoration and remembrance—rests in her revelation that we have not yet seen all that remains to be remembered. In this light, she looks almost as though she has been blasted, like Benjamin's *Angel of History*, into the future by the force of the past (fig. 4). Like him, she is facing backwards; unable to see that which is yet to come, she can only watch the wreckage of history pile up at her feet.[33]

I can repeat the dramatization of her fall again and again. I can cite and compulsively re-cite the phrase *since* count to 2,752.[92]

While attempts to tally the dead accompany all major disasters, investigators claim that the time and energy devoted to determining the correct number of victims from the *World Trade Center* attacks has far exceeded all previous efforts.[93] In part for posterity, the quest to compute each name also aids in the distribution of death benefits. But there is another, more elusive motive behind the city's compulsion: the concretization of memory.

The name, as Derrida has said, is essential to memory. When naming becomes a massive accounting program, a particular kind of memory is at work. The Germans refer to it *Gedächtnis*; it is *both the memory that thinks…and voluntary memory, specifically the mechanical faculty of memorization.*[94] As opposed to the more Proustian

9/11 in order to designate some kind of new world order. But I am still stuck in this terrible suspension where any desire to put this event to death through the work of mourning or the writing of its history is impossible:

There is traumatism with no possible work of mourning when the evil comes from the possibility to come of the worst, from the repetition to come—though worse.[34]

Rather than silencing this impossible mourning, *Tumbling Woman* brings it into focus. Complicating remembrance by invoking an unknown future, the monument's unrealized death similarly prevents her spectators from relegating her to a strictly historical past.

Monument-Building

But it is not even as simple as all this. Something has been happening all along here, following an undeclared *Erinnerung*—involuntary and interiorizing memory—memorization operates less as remembrance than recitation. A technological will to learn the disaster statistics by heart takes over, *hinting that the vicissitudes of merely human memory are not to be trusted.*[95] All this technical memory work is then transformed into an aid to mourning. Affirming that the dead are both dead and accounted for, the recitation of names at Ground Zero ceremonies signals both identification and recognition.

Identification, as a form of affirmation, is essentially forensic: *Yes, that is the name which belongs to this body.* It is an utterance based on the examination of physical evidence. For some grieving relatives, this scientific affirmation of death became the only proof, the only occasion when an absent body was positively matched with a

assumption early on, and I cannot pretend to have finished with the preceding line of inquiry without first attempting a kind of accounting.

I have identified this sculpture as a monument, as though it were self-evident, as though we all agreed on this determination, and as though the implications of this naming were clear and straightforward. The meaning of the word, however, is far from stable. Similar to the terms *naked* and *nude*, a *monument's* significations must be linked with the specific historical and political context in which it is built. Over the course of the 20th century in particular, the concept of memorializing events through the erection of monumental structures became a matter of intense scrutiny. And, as anyone who has followed the various memorial competitions for *Ground Zero* can attest,

name. No wonder, then, that the city undertook a mammoth recovery operation, spanning nearly ten months, to identify as many human remains as possible.

The name of the place is Fresh Kills.[96] Located across the water on Staten Island, specially-commissioned ferries took on the role of so many Charons, transporting the rubble and remains from Ground Zero to this landfill-cum-graveyard. Fresh Kills. Denoting at once preservation and murder, the site was set up on September 12th, 2001 to operate as a massive forensic laboratory.

Encompassing 175 acres, the operation included refrigeration trucks for the preservation of found organic material, sorting trucks to process remains and rubble, and, of course, the landfill proper. Present at the scene:

the debate concerning what constitutes a proper monument continues to rage with no sign of desisting.

Traditionally, monuments celebrate. Exemplifying heroism, strength, virility, and victory, they function at the level of myth. Representing a nation's greatness to itself,

...monuments have long sought to provide a naturalizing locus for memory, in which a state's triumphs and martyrs, its ideals and founding myths, are cast as naturally true as the landscape in which they stand.[35]

Such elaborate architectural glorifications do not simply serve as guidelines for remembering past battles, nor do they merely attempt *to valorize the suffering in such a way as to justify it.*[36] It is not only the past which is sculpted and molded into these structures, but also the

police, forensic specialists, FBI agents...and several museum representatives.

The entire project was photographed. Sanctioned, eventually, by the authorities, a group of museums were granted access to the site in order to document the process for history. The permission they received was unprecedented:

We normally never let outsiders see a crime scene, let alone take photographs or touch anything. We were a tough sell....You remember we were here to find human remains. We were so focused we didn't realize we were part of history.[97]

For history, photographers took pictures of recovered objects and remains, sorting trucks, and workers sifting through fields of rubble. They provided documentation of the procedures; evidence of the evidence.

future. By fixing an image of the past and placing it in a public square for the hoi polloi, the ruling power sends out a call to its subjects: *see, remember, obey.*

J.B. Jackson identifies this disguised attempt to lay claim to the future as the ritual signing of a contract. By reminding the spectator of past wars and triumphs, monuments simultaneously obligate the viewer to promise future obedience and fealty to the state or sovereign: *The monument, in short, is a guide to the future: just as it confers a kind of immortality on the dead, it determines our actions in the years to come*. What a strategic memory-game! Riffing on Nietzsche's assertion that pain is the best mnemonics, these monuments ask us to remember past pain in order to avoid experiencing future agony: *That is why every new revolutionary social order, anxious to establish its*

An exhibition, *Recovery: The World Trade Center Recovery Operation at Fresh Kills*, has emerged out of the documentation of the Fresh Kills operation. While Drew's photograph was decried and condemned, images of a recovered tooth in a test tube, frozen tissue samples, and workers sifting through remains are being framed and hung on museum walls (figs. h, i, j). Sponsored by such high-powered individuals and groups as New York Governor George Pataki, The New York State Senate, The New York State Assembly and the New York State Museum, the exhibition will be traveling across the US. Why is the image of a man tumbling to his death deemed obscene, while photographs of body parts recovered post-mortem are judged important historical evidence and given an exhibition?[98] What is the difference

image and acquire public support, produces many commemorative monuments and symbols and public celebrations….not to please the public but to remind it of what it should believe and how it is to act.[37]

The German and Soviet erections during the 1937 Paris Exhibition, designed by Albert Speer and Boris Iofan respectively, exemplify this classic monumental style of power and virility (figs, 5, 6).

With the twentieth century's increasingly technologized war games—and the resulting overflow of bodies, gore, and wreckage—the traditionally celebratory function of monuments came under focused attack. Criticisms of their physical massiveness—construed as emblematic of the ruling authority's quest for absolute power—are coupled by complex meditations on remembrance.[38]

between the documentary work at Fresh Kills, and Drew's *Falling Man*?

To document is to prove or support, to teach, or to furnish evidence.[99] In photography, so-called documentary work *occupies a privileged place within the rhetoric of immediacy.*[100] But documentary is a category, an *interpretive structure* superimposed on to the image, attributing to it the character of truth.[101] Moreover, documentary is conventionally regarded as *animated by some kind of exhortative, ameliorative, or, at the very least, humanistic impulse.*[102] Of course in order for "documentary" to have meaning as a category, its Other must also be given a name. Typically, the name resembles terms like *expressive*, *aesthetic*, *abstract*…whatever can be said to oppose the so-called objective or indexical content of a documentary photograph.[103]

The "monumental history" epitomized by these traditional structures is indicted for fixing official memory while burying the remains of alternative narratives.[39] Effecting a perpetual and silent betrayal, these structures cite an official version of History, while endorsing a kind of forgetfulness amongst the observing citizens. These citizens, in turn, begin to forget that there is always something else which remains for remembrance, something not contained by the stone and plinth of a formal structure: *It is as if once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember.*[40]

Confronted with the century's unparalleled experience of carnage in warfare, and the resulting interrogations of ceremonial history, artists and governments were faced with the task of

Evidence, in this discursive formation, is not aesthetically pleasing.

In the mainstream media, photography continues to enjoy the roles of evidence-giver, reliable witness, and faithful recorder of history, despite an impressive body of critical work arguing otherwise.[104] But this status is unstable, for if a photograph documenting an atrocity is determined to contain too much of something called "art," it becomes unacceptable—improper. As Susan Sontag writes:

For the photography of atrocity, people want the weight of witnessing without the taint of artistry, which is equated with insincerity or mere contrivance. Pictures of hellish events seem more authentic when they don't have the look that comes from being "properly" lighted and composed....By flying low, artistically-speaking, such pictures are thought to be

representing history in monumental structures, without regressing to monolithic narratives. How is it possible, they asked, for a monument to enable remembrance?[41]

The question opens out onto an abyss, where the very category of memory threatens to erupt. What is a monument, after all, if not a memorial—an aide-mémoire? Robert Musil's deft analysis in his *Posthumous Papers* glibly links this question of monuments and remembrance to a fundamental confusion within language:

Aside from the fact that you never know whether to refer to them as monuments or memorials, monuments do have all kinds of other characteristics. The most salient of these is a bit contradictory; namely, that monuments are so conspicuously inconspicuous. There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument. less manipulative...and less likely to arouse facile compassion or identification.[105]

In other words, a photograph's determination as "appropriate" or not continues to be linked with its classification as either objective evidence or expressive composition.

But what determines the presence or absence of this thing called art? If, as Solomon-Godeau argues, a photograph is nothing but meaning in potentia, then the identification of artistry—or obscenity—occurs after the fact of exposure, within a particular socio-political framework accustomed to reading certain visual signs as *art*, or *obscene*. It is just another meaning, superimposed on to an emulsion of paper and light.[106]

Recall Richard Drew's remark, cited early on, regarding the "look" of that one photograph as opposed to the

Highlighting an as yet indeterminate difference between two terms typically regarded as interchangeable, Musil posits the paradox of visible invisibility.

According to the OED, the two Words, monument and memorial, are not identical, although they do cross and re-cross each other across etymological time.[42] *Memorial* is principally defined as *preserving the memory of a person or thing; often applied to an object set up, or a festival (or the like) instituted, to commemorate and event or person.*[43] Deriving from the Latin memoriālis, its usage also retains a strangely legal sense, giving to *writing* a more prominent role.

Repeatedly across languages, *memorial* is paired with writing, denoting remembrance in legal terms: *reminder, something which recalls something to mind, legal document; memorandum book; historical record....* Drawing on

other eleven he shot in the *Falling Man* series:

That picture just jumped off the screen because of its verticality and symmetry. It just had that look. Explaining that *you learn in photo-editing to look for the frame,* Drew punctures the myth of the documentary category. What appears like a conventional documentary image—a news photograph shot by an official *Associated Press* photographer—is described in artistic language—verticality, framing, the "look." Dissolving the borderlines dividing these discursive categories, Drew's photograph exposes the inextricability of the aesthetic from the documentary.[107] This resistance to classification in turn complicates the superimposition—or identification—of meaning on to the image.

For a photograph to acquire the status of documentary evidence, it must

Derrida's articulations of writing as spacing, the presence of writing within memory automatically indicates absence, death, and haunting:

***Spacing**...is always the unperceived, the nonpresent, and the nonconscious....It marks **the dead time** within the presence of the living present, within the general form of all presence.*[44]

Despite its associations with legal writing, *memorial* reflects the spaces between; the gaps in memory and writing which work against totalitarian formations at every step. In this way, *memorial* keeps in close contact with the Greek figure Mnemosyne; known also as alētheia. Containing oblivion within her—Lethe—alētheia signifies the concealing and revealing work of memory: we remember traces only—the remains of what we have forgotten.

The word *monument*, by contrast, not only adhere to the aesthetic requirements of objectivity, its meaning must also appear clear and obvious. *These firemen are bringing hope to the nation; this man died an honourable death*... Its identification is profoundly instrumental. In the photography of September 11th, bodies, to be appropriate, must be able to be named. The photographs of Fresh Kills describe an operation devoted to naming—to bringing some certainty and affirmation to mourning survivors. Drew's image does not lend itself to patriotic or hopeful narratives. Its subject and style equally unclassifiable, the photograph suspends the viewer between what-has-been and what-will-be, offering only uncertainty and death.

In this sense, Drew's image operates much like an architectural counter-monument: refusing closure and

emphasizes concrete representations of the past: effigies, mausoleums, graveyards, and tombs for the dead. Deriving also from Latin, *monumentum, monimentum*, the word refers primarily to *tombs, sepulchers, statues, buildings, or other structures erected to commemorate a famous or notable person or event.*[45] These are Musil's visibly-invisible structures melting into the background of everyday life; their capacity for inducing remembrance consequently sacrificed in the interests of preserving official history.

While architectural structures have come to dominate our definitions of *monument*, the word comprises *anything that preserves a memory of something*, including written records or a great work of literature.[46] Writing, in other words, cuts a figure within both monuments and memorials.[47] This presence of writing, with its connections to oblivion, absence, mythic tales of heroism, it asks the spectator to be active in the experience of looking. Troubling the operations of memory and identification, it is preoccupied as much with the still to-come as it reflects the effects of the immediate past.

The call for decency and tastefulness in the documentation of this disaster is not innocent. *Show respect for the dead*, we are told. But the dead are not troubled by images of death and dying. It is the living who experience disruption, or rather, the memories of those lost, held on to desperately by the living, which are interrupted by scenes of violence and death recorded on that day. Our task is to interrogate the narratives imposed on to these images in the wake of their development.

Despite the exhaustive efforts of investigators, no balance sheet will ever

and haunting, highlights a possibility for remembrance in monument-building.

Contemporary monument makers are preoccupied with re-inscribing remembrance as arche-writing—death, oblivion, absence, forgetfulness—into monument-building. The resulting structures challenge not only traditional purposes, but also the recognizable *monumental* forms.

In his study of Holocaust memorials, James Young names these productions *counter-monuments*. From Horst Hoheisel's proposal to blow up the Brandenburg Gate, to Rachel Whiteread's negative-space library installation, the emphasis is on the impossible: making absence visible (fig. 7). Putting a twist on Musil's *visible invisibility*, these artists seek to bestow tangibility on to loss, giving us the negative space around absence as a double as a technique for *making sense* of the event. Identification and recognition do not indicate comprehension. Moreover, the final tally remains elusive; after more than two years of searching, the exact number of victims is even now uncertain. While 19,936 remains have been found, they have not all been matched for positive identification. We will never know how many other remains were never recovered.[108] The failure to recover, the failure to name, the failure to account. All of these instances epitomize the experience of what has come to be called *9/11*, the name itself operating more as a compulsive repetition than a sign of recognition or comprehension of the event.

To comprehend denotes not simply understanding, but also possession. And possession, as Derrida articulates, is allied with phallogocentric

means of resurrecting the traces of memory.

Recounting the ongoing debate in Germany for memorializing the Holocaust, Young compellingly suggests that perhaps the most important aspect of the counter-monument is its perpetual un-finishedness. Due either to the never-ending competitions which seek an appropriate proposal, or the design of the monuments themselves,

the surest engagement with Holocaust memory in Germany may actually lie in its perpetual irresolution, that only an unfinished memorial process can guarantee the life of memory. For it may be the finished monument that completes memory itself...[48]

Referring not only to ongoing attempts to re-conceive past, this unfinishedness also bears upon the future, asking us to remember what may yet come, reminding

valuations of the Proper. Possession, self-possession, proximity to Being, being recognizable and identifiable, being certain…These are all qualities deemed not simply desirable, but also necessary to the functioning of Western nations. When these qualities are absent in a thing or being, a crisis of classification ensues.[109] Bataille elaborates on this crisis, arguing that the category of *obscenity* arises wherever the Proper as self-possession fails to function.[110] When possession—or comprehension—fails on such a massive scale as it has following September 11th, 2001, then *obscenity* emerges less as a charge of bad taste, and more as a series of failures to identify and understand. *Obscenity*. What is not seen. What should not be seen. What falls below our radar screens of identification. *Obscenity*. Another word for absence, another word for failure.

us that the past can always be repeated.

In this way, counter or anti-monuments represent the future as a kind of haunting. While they do not function in the same repressive fashion as the examples from Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, these structures require an engagement with futuricity. With their self-conscious deliberations regarding the purpose and deployment of official memorialization, counter-monuments shift the public burden from blind obedience, to active concern with current government policies and military action. The haunting initiated by such monuments is at least double; while they foreground the impossibility of representing past horrors, they also forecast the future as an unknown and potentially horrible repetition of the past.

Echoing Derrida's argument regarding the repetition to come, counter-

If failure characterizes so much of this day and its ongoing aftermath, then failure must be acknowledged, and given a place in our attempts at commemoration. As so many contemporary artists have suggested, the goal of memorialization is not comprehension but meditation. Like mourning, it is a process without end, seeking active reflection by those who wish to grieve and to remember. Remembrance, moreover encompasses failure; what I remember, whether through active recall or involuntary return, is always a jigsaw of presence and absence.[111] What recurs as memory are only so many pieces—fragments of remains—from a picture that was never whole to begin with.

The winning memorial design for the World Trade Center site remembers the significance of absence and failure to

monuments seek to provoke a thinking of the future as a force haunting the Now. As a warning, the contract is still repressive, but it no longer provides a Truth to claim, or a leader to follow. Counter-monuments re-write the Nietzschean contract from an obligation to be the same across time, to a more Derridean sense of perpetual indebtedness to both the past and the future.

This description suggests an uncanny similarity to Heidegger's alētheia, telling us over and over again: we do not know what we are looking at, we do not know how to remember, or what we are forgetting. *Tumbling Woman* reiterates this monumental ambiguity, her unfinishedness signing a double anxiety for remembrance: what will the future look like, and how will we manage to remember it? As a counter-

the events of September 11th. Named *Reflecting Absence*, the plan takes advantage of the voids left by the towers' collapse, transforming them into deep reflecting pools. Visitors descend into the memorial through a passageway that leads them away from the city. Then, *[a]t the bottom of their descent, they find themselves behind a thin curtain of water, staring out at an enormous pool. Surrounding this pool is a continuous ribbon of names. The enormity of this space and the multitude of names that form this endless ribbon underscore the vast scope of the destruction. Standing there at the water's edge, looking at a pool of water that is flowing away into an abyss, a visitor to the site can sense that what is beyond this curtain of water and ribbon of names is inaccessible.*[112] The names designate a limit; a limit both of knowledge and of memory. All that

monument, *Tumbling Woman* does not extend its grip into the future as a grasp for control and mastery, but rather compresses the past and the future into the Now as a sign of warning. It does this by addressing the impossibilities of representation, and by articulating an indebtedness, or contractual obligation, to the living, the dead, and the unborn.	we cannot understand of the event itself, and all that remains to come in the form of the future, lies just beyond our sightlines. The memorial encourages us to remember that we do not see all these absences, and it provides a space where the drive to identify can be relinquished in the face of absolute loss.

Fig. 1: Eric Fischl's *Tumbling Woman* Source: http://www.ericfischl.com/sculpture.htm

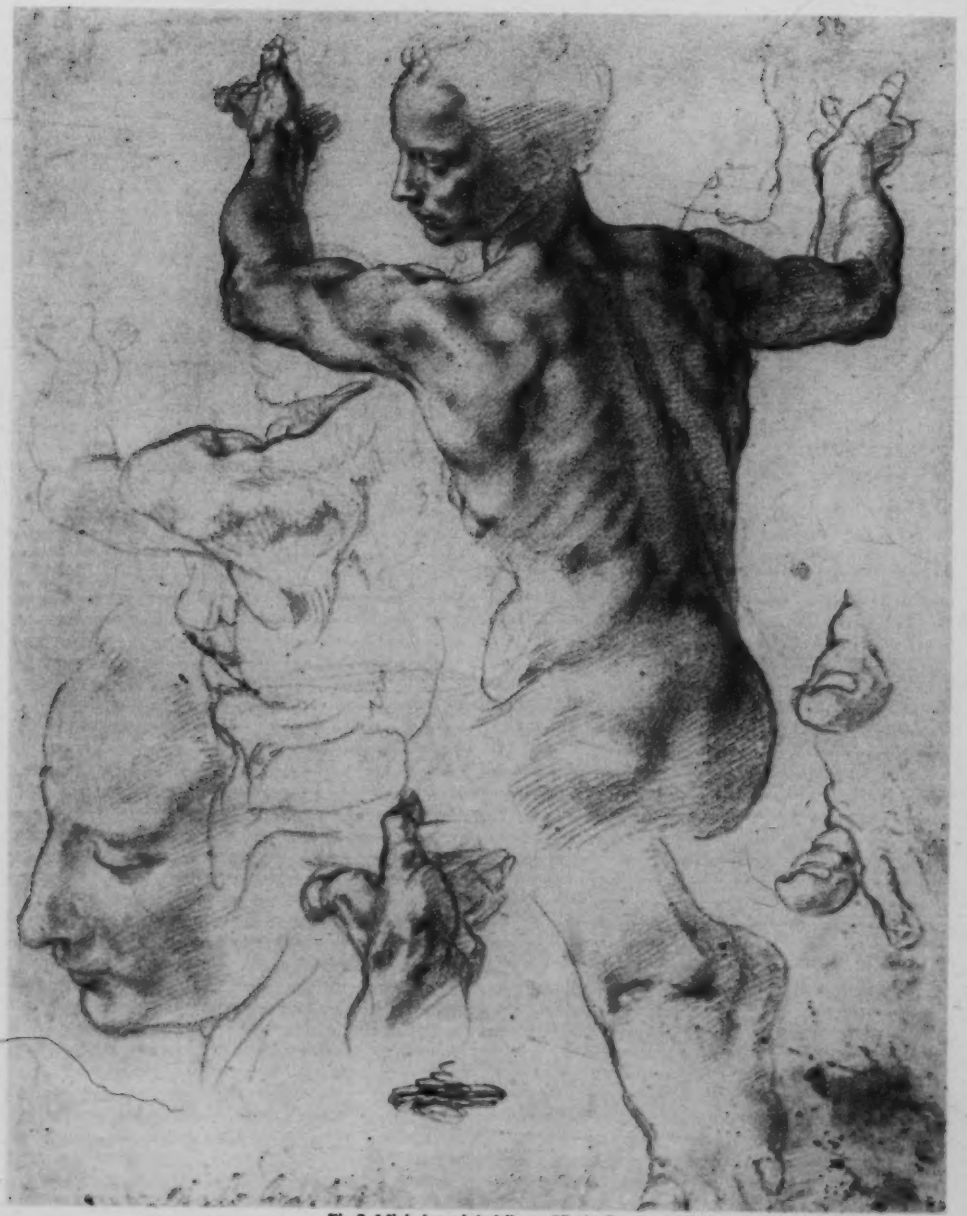


Fig 2: Michelangelo's *Libyan Sibyl* Source: H.W. Janson's *History of Art*

Fig. 3: *Rape of the Sabine Woman* Source: H.W. Janson's *History of Art*

Fig. 4: Klee's *Angelus Novus* Source: http://www.bibliolab.it/sotlosviluppo/Sviluppo/Home_page_di_ingresso.htm

Fig. 5: German Pavilion Source: http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~aprobert/paris371.htm

Fig. 6: Soviet Pavilion Source: http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~aprobert/paris371.htm

Fig. 7: Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled (Paperbacks)* Source: *Modern Contemporary: Art at MoMA Since 1980*

Fig. 1: Richard Drew's *Falling Man* Source: Associated Press Photographs

Fig. b: Survivor I Source: http://www.hereinnewyork.org

Fig. c: Survivor II Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. d: Survivor III Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. e: Father Mychal Judge Source: http://www.hereisnewyork.org

Fig. f: 9/11 Flag-Raising Source: *The Record*

Fig. g: Iwo-Jima Flag-Raising Source: *Associated Press*

Fig. h: Recovered tooth Source: http://www.richpress.com

Fig. i: Tissue Samples Source: http://www.richpress.com

Fig. j: Workers sifting through Fresh Kills Source: http://www.richpress.com

[1] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 53. He is citing Kenneth Clark's influential study: *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. (1972)
[2] Ibid., 54
[3] Ibid., 58
[4] Ibid., 57
[5] For a fascinating analysis on the dangers of community and communion, particularly with respect to fascism, see Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperable Community*.
[6] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp?
[7] In an essay on a note from Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Derrida articulates the necessity of attending to the form of questions in general, writing: "It is not any given determination of the meaning of time that belongs to onto-theo-teleology, but it is the anticipation of its meaning. Time already has been suppressed at the moment one asks the question of its meaning, when one relates it to appearing, truth, presence, or essence in *general*." ("*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 52-53)
[8] Derrida, *The Postcard*, 4.
[9] To re-state: because she is not finished—elle n'est pas finie—in the terminal sense. In French, the use of Être (instead of Avoir) with the verb *finir* signifies completion as death, rather than simply designating the termination of some task.
[10] I mean *comprehension* both in the sense of understanding and of containing. Not simply because as a sculpture, she resists reduction through narrative language, but also because her story does not end. She has not yet died—elle n'est pas encore finie. As such, she bears an essential relation to questions of time, of futuricity, and of what cannot yet be known. Cassandra, of course, was that doomed prophetess from Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*.
[11] Beginning with the Greeks, and continuing on through primarily Rousseau, Saussure, and Peirce, Derrida cites a historical tradition of debasing writing, or graphic text, while elevating the phonē, or live speech. Indicted as an exterior form, hopelessly fallen from self-presence and absolute proximity—the Proper—the graphic form is "the outside, the exterior representation of language and of this "thought-sound." (*OG*, 31)
[12] Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, 18.
[13] While it is not within the scope of this chapter, the borderlines separating naked from nude in traditional art criticism need to be interrogated. Some writers who have begun to address this are: Davidov, *Women's Camera Work*, 1998; and Pultz, *The Body and the Lens*, 1995.
[14] Peyser, "Shameful Art Attack," 18 September, 2002.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.; Peyser, "Sick 9/11 Art Yanked," 19 September, 2002; Peyser, "Tacky Statue Yanked from Rock Center," 20 September, 2002.
[17] See: Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," 169-175.
[18] Peyser, "Sick 9/11 Art Yanked," 19 September, 2002.
[19] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 70-71.
[20] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 180.
[21] For Heidegger, truth is anything but a recapitulation of the metaphysics of the Proper: *Truth means the essence of the true. We think this essence in recollecting the Greek word alētheia, the unconcealment of beings....The essence of truth as alētheia was not thought out in the thinking of the Greeks, and certainly not in the philosophy that followed after. Unconcealment is, for thought, the most concealed thing in Greek existence, although from early times it determines the presencing of everything present.* (Ibid, 176)
[22] Ibid., 180
[23] Ibid., 178

[24] Heidegger writes: "The essence of truth which is familiar to us—correctness in representation—stands and falls with truth as unconcealment of beings." (Ibid., 177) Susan Sontag makes a similar argument in her manifesto against classical art interpretation: "Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed of items of content, violates art. It makes art into an article for use, for arrangement into a mental scheme of categories." ("Against Interpretation," 10)

[25] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 101.

[26] Ibid., 101.

[27] For a fascinating analysis of Bush the Younger's sense of historical obligation to Bush Senior's experiences in World War II and Iraq, see Avital Ronell's essay: "Support our Tropes: Reading Desert Storm." Reading this piece now, in the wake of the US government's activities since 9/11, casts an even more harrowing light on the current administration's military projects.

[28] The official policy of implicating Iraq in 9/11, to war with Iraq, to denouncing the notion that Iraq was ever involved in 9/11 is a classic example of the US government's (and its allies) modes of doublespeak.

[29] Regarding the current state of perpetual war abroad, many critics have remarked on the uncanny relevance of George Orwell's classic *1984*. Gore Vidal's *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* provides a similar, if more contemporary, analysis.

[30] One could argue that Derrida has only ever written about mourning, but some of the more obvious texts on the subject include: *Specters of Marx, Cinders, Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas, The Gift of Death,* and, *Of Grammatology*.

[31] Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, 97.

[32] Ibid., 97-98.

[33] See: Benjamin, "Theses for a Philosophy of History," 253-264.

[34] Borradori, 97.

[35] Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 6.

[36] Ibid., 6.

[37] Jackson, "The Necessity for Ruins," 92. On pain and memory as constitutional of the civilized subject, see Nietzsche's *On The Genealogy of Morality*.

[38] James Young writes: "A new generation of cubists and expressionists, in particular, rejected traditional mimetic and heroic evocations of events, contending that any such remembrance would elevate and mythologize events. In their view, yet another classically-proportioned Prometheus would have falsely glorified and thereby redeemed the horrible suffering they were called upon to mourn." (Ibid, 6) For further reading, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Bataille, Lewis Mumford, Martin Broszat, Pierre Nora, and Rosalind Krauss are among the many writers who have targeted monumental structures for their production of monumental histories.

[39] Nietzsche's phrase, from *The Use and Abuse of History*.

[40] Young, 6.

[41] I use *remembrance* deliberately here, with its echoes of Proust's eruptive madeleine-eating experience. Two words, from the German, are typically used to explicate and distinguish different forms of memory: Gedächtnis, the "thinking, mechanical" memory, and Erinnerung, the interiorizing memory of recollection. See Derrida's writing on memory in *Memoires: for Paul de Man*, 28.

[42] The following etymological work is not intended to determine the proper meanings and usages of each term. Instead, I wish to suggest that the possibility for what James Young names "counter-monuments" can be traced through the history of these words.

[43] *Oxford English Dictionary*

[44] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 68-69.

[45] *Oxford English Dictionary*

[46] Ibid.

[47] Writing here refers to Derrida's articulations of *arche-writing*, not writing in the limited, or *vulgar sense* of inscribed text. See *Of Grammatology*.

[48] Young, 5.

[49] Junod, "The Falling Man."

[50] Richard Drew, cited in Junod.

[51] Unsurprisingly, the other photographs in the sequence present an entirely different narrative of the falling man's downward flight:

> In truth, however, the Falling Man fell with neither the precision of an arrow nor the grace of an Olympic diver. He fell like everyone else, like all the other jumpers—trying to hold on to the life he was leaving, which is to say that he fell desperately, inelegantly. In Drew's famous photograph, his humanity is in accord with the lines of the buildings. In the rest of the sequence—the 11 out-takes—his humanity stands apart. He is not augmented by aesthetics; he is merely human, and his humanity, startled and in some cases horizontal, obliterates everything else in the frame. (Ibid.)

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Levi-Strauss, *Between the Eyes*, 184.

[55] See Bataille's work on sex and death in *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*.

[56] As a discursive formation, pornography remains fluid. While the spurious attempt to distinguish between porn and its so-called softer side—eroticism—is ongoing, pornography as an ontological category does not exist, and so evades definition. Civic or moral groups *know it when they see it*, of course, and this elusiveness adds to its power in judgment.

[57] Junod, "Falling Man." Junod refers to still images; for the video clips of the planes crashing, and the towers collapsing also became taboo.

[58] On pornography and death:
In his seminal essay "The Pornography of Death," Geoffrey Gorer argues that pornography is intertwined with prudery. Like porn, prudery operates contextually: "some aspect of human experience is treated as inherently shameful or abhorrent, so that it can never be referred to openly, and experience of it tends to be clandestine and accompanied by feelings of guilt and unworthiness." (171) While various representations of sex have long been targeted as unfit for public viewing, Gorer argues that in the twentieth century, depictions of so-called *natural death*—death resulting from old age, disease, etc—have overshadowed sexuality as a category of the obscene: "whereas copulation has become more and more 'mentionable'…death has become more and more 'unmentionable' as a natural process…. The natural processes of corruption and decay have become disgusting…" (172) The consequences of this taboo upon viewing death in the everyday, Gorer argues, is a pornography of exotic death: "violent death has played an ever-growing part in the fantasies offered to mass audiences—detective stories, thrillers, Westerns, war stories, spy stories, science fiction, and eventually horror comics." (173) By repressing representations of *natural* death in the public domain, Gorer contends that modernity has ignited and fed a seemingly insatiable appetite for fantasies of violent, terrible death.

But Gorer's argument hinges on a series of distinctions that remain as untenable as the differentiation between pornography and eroticism. The delineation between violent and non-violent, or *natural*, death is one such distinction. While his insistence on pornography as a discursive category is important, the ensuing claim for pornographic emergence out of repression regresses into a monolithic vision of power and censorship, which depends in turn upon totalized notions of the *masses*. Finally, his contention that this emergence of violent death in so-called clandestine writing is relatively recent must be complicated by acknowledging a historical precedent for writings of violent and exotic death. Shakespeare's History plays provide an obvious counterpoint, but countless others exist, many of which have never been considered covert or surreptitious. Historical context becomes vital in this kind of analysis, taking into account a given era's conceptions of violence, an understanding of language-codes specific to the time, as well as knowledge of printing and publication techniques, readership, and dissemination of materials. For theatrical productions, of course, other factors of style and performance must also be situated in time and place. Michel Foucault's analysis of censorship and repression in *The History of Sexuality* provides one starting point for theoretically complicating Gorer's work; his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," is another.

[59] At least one internet site featuring jumper photographs has been set up at: http://www.twin-towers.net/jumpers.htm.

[60] As Junod writes, the number of jumpers on September 11th, is far from insignificant:

The Times, admittedly conservative, decided to count only what its reporters actually saw in the footage they collected, and it arrived at a figure of 50. *USA Today*, whose editors used eyewitness accounts and forensic evidence in addition to what they found on video, came to the conclusion that at least 200 people died by jumping, a count that the newspaper authorities did not dispute....if the number provided by *USA Today* is accurate, then between 7 and 8 per cent of those who died...died by jumping out of the buildings; it means that if we consider only the North Tower, where the vast majority of jumpers came from, the ratio is more like one in six. (Ibid.)

[61] Graphē" is the Greek word for writing; "Photography," from the Greek, translates as *light writing*, or, *writing in light*.

[62] Conrad, "On the Eleventh Day." 11/25/2001.

[63] *Reporters without Borders*, "United States: United States –Annual Report 2002," 4/23/2002.

[64] While these actions were taking place inside the US borders, attacks on non-US journalistic operations were also being carried out: "In Afghanistan, American forces bombed the Afghan radio and TV headquarters. The offices of Al Jazeera, the BBC and the Associated Press (AP) news agency were also hit during the attack on Kabul. US Special Forces tried to keep reporters away from the Tora Bora region when they suspected Bin Laden was hiding there." (Ibid.) The US government has also extended its control to the skies. In October, 2001, just before the attack on Afghanistan began, the Defense Department bought up the "exclusive rights to all available satellite images of Afghanistan and neighboring countries....The agreement ...produced an effective white-out of the operation, preventing Western media from seeing the effects of the bombing and eliminating the possibility of independent verification or refutation of government claims....The CEO of *Space Imaging Inc.* said, 'They are buying all the imagery that is available.' There is nothing left to see." (Levi-Strauss, 190) What we are left to write, in the wake of these events, as well as in the midst of those yet in motion, is absence: what we do not see, are not shown, can not know.

[65] *Reporters without borders*, "Between the pull of patriotism and self-censorship," 10/11/2001. Note that the numbers of dead cited here have been revised several times. I address this later on in the chapter.

[66] Ibid. In her essay, "Dead Stuff," Annie Proulx provides a brief summary of the history of dead bodies in US war photography. See Proulx, "Dead Stuff," 30-35.

[67] *Reporters without borders*, "Between the pull of patriotism and self-censorhip."

[68] Two exceptions to this exclusion: 1) In the entire *Here is New York: A Democracy of Photographs* anthology, one photograph of a severed and dismembered leg has been included (p. 264); 2) An internet site featuring jumper photographs, http://www.twin-towers.net/jumpers.htm, contains a link to a supposedly hoax photograph of the body of a jumper after hitting the ground. The morality of looking I referred to earlier extends even further in this instance: because the photo has been determined a fake, it is excluded from the true photographs of the jumpers.

[69] Wigley, "Insecurity by Design," 73.

[70] Ibid., 73.

[71] This is why any reductive charge of repressive state censorship in the case of certain 9/11 images must be resisted. Countless stories of government intervention and suppression have emerged, but they are accompanied by a more generalized display of individually performed acts of censorship. For example, Jules Naudet, French documentary filmmaker of the towers' collapse, remembers that almost immediately upon entering tower one, a kind of "auto-censorship" kicked in. Watching people dying all around him, their bodies engulfed in flames, Naudet was unable to film the carnage:

> As I entered this building I hear a scream on my right and I just turned and seeing that horrible image of two people who are still alive and moving but who are in flames and dying in front of my own eyes. The image was so horrible and so traumatizing in a way and I didn't film it...it was so bad...there is some kind of respect that should be shown in death. That kind of auto-censorship, we did it for the rest of the day and the weeks to come...we always shied away from showing that.

Naudet's insistence on respectful representation, a pronouncement oft-repeated in the days following the attacks by journalists, government officials, and civilians alike, marks a chiasmus of image and

mourning. But what determines respect in an image? (O'Carroll, "9/11 makers 'refused to film the dying.'" 9/12/2002)

[72] As Dr. Sharon Rosenberg commented in a recent social theory symposium, *la sociologie est passé*, at the University of Alberta (October, 2003),we are not only being asked to look away from certain images, but to look towards others. Patriotic images in particular.

[73] See, for example, *Here is New York: A Democracy of Photographs*; *The September 11 Photo Project*; *New York September 11, by Magnum Photographer*; *Brotherhood in Strength and Sorrow: Images of the FDNY*; and, *September 11: A Testimony*.

[74] Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock*, 100.

[75] The now famous faces in the missing posters first erected around Union Square are similarly caught in the passage between life and death. The missing posters soon became memorials; but in those first, terrible days, their subjects are not yet recognized as dead, only missing. While the missing posters eventually became identified as memorial sites, they remain essentially liminal, and as such undefinable, unnameable.

[76]Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

[77] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 82.

[78] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 258.

[79] Ibid., 245-268.

[80] Ibid., 253.

[81] Derrida, *Memoires*, 28.

[82] Derrida, "By Force of Mourning," 188.

[83] Derrida discusses this resistance to the ontological question at greater length in "By Force of Mourning."

[84] Derrida, *Memoires*, 55.

[85] From Charcot's images of hysterical women patients in La Salpêtrière, to early police detective photos, to photographs attempting to establish physical signs of criminality and insanity, photography has from its birth been concerned with both bourgeois portraiture and its underbelly—profiling and identification. As Barthes writes: "Photography, moreover, began, historically, as an art of the Person: of identity, of civil status, of what we might call, in all senses of the term, the body's *formality*." (*Camera Lucida*, 79)

[86] Junod, "Falling Man."

[87] As Junod writes: Many of the dead were Latino, or light-skinned black men, or Indian or Arab. Many had dark hair cut short. Many had moustaches and goatees. Indeed, to anyone trying to figure out the identity of the Falling Man, the few salient characteristics that can be discerned in the original series of photographs raise as many possibilities as they exclude."

[88] Cheney's attempt to establish Norberto Hernandez as the *Falling Man* is of particular import when considering the difficulties and complexities of such a quest. Torn apart over this very photograph, the various reactions of the Hernandez family, as reported by Junod, give a face to the question of whether or not such an attempt at identification should be made.

[89] Junod.

[90] See Sophocles tragedy: *Antigone*

[91] Keenan, "Making the Dead Count, Literally," 30 November, 2003.

[92] Barry, "A New Account of Sept. 11 Loss, With 40 Fewer Souls to Mourn," 29 October, 2003. As Barry writes, the reasons for the decline in these numbers range from "finding people once thought dead; duplication; insufficient data; fraud. In many cases, investigators could not prove a supposed victim had ever existed…"

[93] Ibid.

[94] Derrida, *Memoires*, 51.

[95] Keenan, ibid.

[96] The hunt for dead bodies at Ground Zero and Fresh Kills is paralleled by the hunt undertaken by the US and its allies for live bodies following September 11, 2001. Allied armies are searching for various proper names, among them: Bin Laden and, latterly, Saddam Hussein. At a civilian level, much work remains to be done on all that has happened to bodies since the towers fell: deportation, torture, border

crossings, airport security, immigration issues...all of these events signaling so many different attempts to fix and regulate bodies in a kind of perpetual terror-prevention program.

[97] FBI Special Agent Richard Marx cited on the *New York State Museum*'s Recovery exhibition brochure.

[98] Some suggest time is the answer. After the passage of a certain time, we now have museums devoted to the Holocaust. We can meditate on exhibits of shoes, tooth fillings, and spectacles *because* they serve as aides-mémoire. Visiting museums and making pilgrimages to death camps is a proper and officially sanctioned method of remembrance. This has not always been the case. As Christy Ferer, cited by Tom Junod suggests, "They can show that now....But [the Holocaust] was a long time ago. They couldn't show things like that then." But, as Junod counters, "Of course these objects were exhibited after the war, but the medium was photography, not gallery display. The stated purpose of these images? Evidence. ...the pictures that came out of the death camps of Europe were treated as essential acts of witness, without particular regard to the sensitivities of those who appeared in them or the surviving families of the dead."
Time alone cannot account for the different treatment of Drew's image from the work at Fresh Kills. I suspect part of the answer lies not only in the instrumentality of identification, as I argue further on, but also in the changing conceptions of museums and the social work they can perform for spectators. (Junod)

[99] *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[100] Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 8.

[101] Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning*, xvi.

[102] Solomon-Godeau, xxvii.

[103] As Solomon-Godeau writes:

> the ability even to formulate the notion of a documentary mode is predicated on the perceived presence of its Other(s). Which is to say that without the coexistence of alternative models of photography...the very notion of documentary becomes tautological. This immediately foregrounds the question of documentary's discursive construction: how is documentary thought and what ideological work is it performing? (xxviii)

[104] See, for example, the work of Roland Barthes, Geoffrey Batchen, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, and Susan Sontag.

[105] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 26-27.

[106] But the imposition of these identifications, despite their semiotic arbitrariness, continues to produce material effects, like attempts at censorship.

[107] My thanks to Mark Simpson for help in formulating this.

[108] *Reflecting Absence*, the winning memorial design, reproduces both the successes and failures of technological memory. While the names of the identified victims will be inscribed around two reflecting pools, a stone container holding unidentified remains will stand alongside the acknowledged dead.

[109] See Giorgio Agamben's work in *The Coming Community* on the *whatever being* and this crisis of identification. Agamben, Giorgio.

[110] Bataille, *Erotism*, 17-18.

[111] See Derrida on memory and failure in *Memoires*, 57-58.

[112] Designers Michael Arad and Peter Walker, describing their vision for *Reflecting Absence*. See: http://www.wtcsitememorial.org/fin7.html.

Postcard Memories

The postcard converts a "public" event into a "private" appropriation...[1]

–John Frow

...you know that I do not believe in propriety, property, and above all not in the form that it takes according to the opposition public/private...[2]

–Jacques Derrida

Postcard: *You Never Walk Alone* Source: http://www.thismodernworld.org/gra/WTCcard5.jpg

The postcard says it all. In bold red letters, **You Never Walk Alone** is stamped across the top of one card featuring a collage of images. Directly beneath the caption, this inscription—*New York, September 11th, 2001*—marks the date never to be forgotten. Positioned top-center, a giant American flag nearly dwarfs the smoking towers of the World Trade Center which frame it. Two images of the towers are pictured here. The first depicts the towers before they fell, spewing smoke from the impact sites; the second captures the aftermath—a smoky pile of rubble with twisted steel girders rising out of the ash. Framed by these sets of tower photos, as well as the US flag, President Bush is shown standing at a lectern, presumably delivering a message of hope and a promise for justice. In the card's foreground, images of rescue workers and spontaneous memorials complete the picture. The postcard speaks to an undistinguished, non-differentiated YOU in the voice of God: "Fear not, for I am with you…"

Along with snow globes, calendars, t-shirts, and coffee mugs, postcards commemorating the events of September 11th appeared on tourist tables within days of the attack. Despite the overwhelming assortment of such cards, their similarities, suggesting variations on a theme, are unmistakable. Typical offerings, available everywhere from Ground Zero vendors to uptown souvenir shops, present a collage of images combining photographs of the disaster with such iconic symbols of America as the bald eagle and the flag. Captions referring variously to New York or America situate the event as both local and national, and that now infamous date, September 11th, 2001, is almost always included.

Postcard: *America's Darkest Moment* Source: http://www.thismodernworld.org/gra/staccard1.jpg

Postcard: *Attack on Manhattan* Source: http://www.thismodernworld.org/gra/wtccard6.jpg

Susan Stewart argues that postcards generate a metamorphosis from outside to inside via a reduction of the public into the private:

> what is being effected here is the transformation of exterior into interior. Spatially, as any postcard tells us, this works most often through a reduction of dimensions. The souvenir reduces the public, the monumental, and the 3-D into the miniature…that which can be appropriated within the privatized view of the individual subject.[3]

In other words, the postcard, an object manufactured en masse and purchased from diverse public domains such as the tourist table, the bookstore, and the airport, eventually arrives at its destination: the private gaze of its possessor. Through diverse technologies of reduction, outside "events"—those which occur in a zone called *public*—become the property of the card's possessor. Size matters in this schema, and tiny reproductions travel more easily through the optic nerve, and into the realm designated *interior*. The multiplicity of possible interiors—a body, a private domicile, the unconscious—is already enough to suggest a hitch in Stewart's logic.

Visual reduction results in the appropriation—internalization, possession, proprietorship—of meaning. The argument is a dangerous one, depending as it does upon the discursive stability of several highly contested categories, notably: interior and exterior, the individual subject, and appropriation. While Stewart's analysis gestures towards processes of reductive identification, she glosses over the postcard's viral logic—its fundamental contamination of public and private, inside and out.[4]

Conventional readings identify one side of the postcard with "the public," displaying the mass re-produced image or caption, while the other side bears "private" messages from sender to receiver:

> That remarkable souvenir, the postcard, is characterized by a complex process of captioning and display which repeats this transformation of public into private. First, as a mass-produced view of a culturally articulated site, the postcard is purchased. Yet this purchase, taking placed within an "authentic" context of the site itself, appears as a kind of private experience as the self recovers the object, inscribing the handwriting of the personal beneath the more uniform caption of the social.[5]

But a card's mass produced image may just as easily refer to a private joke between sender and receiver, a kind of cipher which will remain unread by all who see a familiar image and imagine they understand its import. As Derrida writes: "What I prefer, about post cards, is that one does not know what is in front or what is in back, here or there, near or far....Nor what is the most important, the picture or the text, and in the text, the message or the caption, or the address."[6] Moreover, the distinction between "personal handwriting" and the card's social uniformity cannot be maintained when we take into account the movements of interpellation, and the collapse of borders between interior and exterior. The question: Who or What speaks on a postcard? is, ultimately, undecideable.

America by Night, 2004
Collection of Corbis Archives

You sent me a postcard once, and they charged you extra because you had crossed the line dividing message from address. You had crossed an invisible border and, as a result, the message was flagged. The message may not arrive, they told you, unless you paid for the transgression. But the line they referred to was nonexistent: no such marking was inscribed on the card. Nor could we decipher what was at stake in this border crossing; why the Postal Service was so invested in separating your message to me from the identification of the postcard's destination. Ever since, I have wondered about this invisible line, and how the differences between message and address might dissolve without State procedures for careful tracking and identification.

Postcard: *America by Night* Source: Author's Design

With restrained humour, one narrator in Derrida's *The Postcard* writes, on a postcard, "Look closely at this card, it's a reproduction." From technical reproductions of images on postcards, to the mass production of cards featuring the same images, to the millions of cards with their infinity of messages and images circulating around the globe, postcards operate simultaneously according to logics of reduction, replication, and multiplication. Once this tension is acknowledged, the rhetoric of insides and outsides, public and private, and successful communication begins to unravel. Bearing an uncanny resemblance to the movements of viral transmission, postcards expose a fundamental instability within the system of language and communication.

Steven Shaviro argues that "[a] virus is nothing but DNA or RNA encased in a protective sheath; that is to say, it is a message – encoded in nucleic acid – whose only content is an order to repeat itself."[7] The distinction, moreover, between host and virus "is only a matter of practical convenience. It is impossible actually to isolate the organism in a state before it has been infiltrated by viruses, or altered by mutations."[8] Operating simultaneously as both carrier (host) and virus (message), postcards disseminate the linguistic transmissions of others. Bearing messages of contamination, postcards erode the divisions between host and parasite, medium and message; they post the impossibility of locating "pure interiority . . . even before language."[9] If language is a virus, "communication" signals viral transmission and linguistic deliveries are simply forms of home invasion and infestation. Postcards, and the system which delivers them, house and transmit the improper.[10]

Given these logics of reproduction and dissemination, postcards paradoxically rupture the very concept of authenticity they purport to capture and circulate. Critics have long noted that cultural souvenirs are frequently produced according to tourist desires for the Other: authenticity is manufactured. In this epoch of electronic circulation, postcard purchases are no longer dependent upon travel to these so-called authentic sites. The Italian Renaissance is available from museums in New York; the San Diego Zoo is for sale in various American airports; post-9/11 Ground Zero cards circulate online.[11] In Derrida's language, postcards are iterations—products of citation which demonstrate the absence of an original context for their production:

> Every sign...can be *cited,* put between quotation marks; thereby it

> can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that a mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring.[12]

September 11th commemorative postcards, then, must be understood not as representative of that day, but as a series of messages delivered in the wake of that day—post-cards in a literal sense. Subject to reproduction, re-transmission, and re-iteration, these messages cannot be relied upon as fixed or stable; reading them thus becomes a necessary but impossible task. Derrida's narrator goes so far as to suggest that postcards exhibit a certain truth inherent in all discourse: "Everything becomes a post card once more, legible for the other, even if he understands nothing about it."[13] As an event, 9/11 has become its own postcard through historical reduction and large-scale dissemination.

Postcard: *Attack on Manhattan II* Source: http://www.thismodernworld.org/gra/wtccard2.jpg

Articulating a world "in which the distinctions between interior and exterior, subject and object, are 'irrevocably blurred,'" commemorative 9/11 postcards illuminate *The Postcard's* lesson that a message may never arrive.[14] Arrival, the successful delivery of a message, indicates an ontotheological faith in the direct and stable transmission of meaning. When arrival as a concept comes under suspicion, the strange necessity for State interception during transmission becomes detectable: successful arrival requires State interference. How many hands touch such cards, from production through purchase, from postal pick-ups through arrival at pseudo-destination? Its personal messages pass under the gaze of countless State employees of the postal service prior to delivery, exposing the concept of private experience as dubious at best. Despite its cipher-like qualities, its text is an open book. As Derrida

writes: "What I like about post cards is that even if in an envelope, they are made to circulate like an open but illegible letter."[15] Highlighting the disconnect between communication and comprehension—the proper possession or appropriation of fixed meaning—the ostensible accessibility of postcard messages signals a confusion of the terms public and private for any populace subject to State mechanisms of surveillance.

Post-9/11, subjects residing on American soil were subjected to radical processes of reduction; they became postcards passing through the registration and accounting programs of diverse government outposts, operating under the umbrella structure invented especially for the cause: The Department of Homeland Security. "Imagine a city," Derrida writes, "a State in which identity cards were post cards. No more possible resistance."[16] Once again, the classic opposition of public/private mutates into operations of surveillance and invasion:

> This opposition [between public and private] doesn't work, neither for psychoanalysis…nor for the post (the post card is neither private nor public), nor even for the police (they leave us, whatever the regime, only the choice between several police forces, and when a pp (public police) doesn't accost you in the street, another pp (private parallel police) plugs its microphones into your bed, seizes your mail, makes you spit it out in full ecstasy…this is what I call a post card.[17]

Carried through the viral logic of the postal service to a third party, and held on to as a treasured souvenir, the question of the postcard's arrival begs the question of

addressee, of audience and of reception (how are the messages read?), of tracking procedures (surveillance), of returned mail (deportation), and of poisoned packages (anthrax). Instead of tracing a simple appropriation from some indeterminate notion of the *public sphere* into another, equally undefined realm identified as *the private*, the circulation of 9/11 postcards highlights a series of breakdowns of individual privacy, of fortifications of State privacy, and of the consequent objectification and classification of America and its subjects.

Library Records Archive Room
Collection of Museum of Jurassic Technology

I walk through airport security in stocking feet now, much like I do during routine mornings making coffee, retrieving the paper, and brushing my teeth. Watching my shoes pass through X-ray security, a piece of my private self is revealed as I submit to so many scans of my personal belongings. For a split second, I begin to sense that it is not simply our cameras, laptops, or prescription drugs being exposed through photographic technology, but that the myriad cameras and security wands accomplish their tasks with an eye towards something far more complex; they seek to re-identify us as wholly public beings, transparent to the state and subject, for the good of the state, to all demands for exposure.

Postcard: Airport Security I Source: Author's Design

Postcard: *Airport Security II* Source: Author's Design

Looking for a Sign…

The movements of these postcards, bearing their messages of patriotism, security, and belonging, indicate the already accomplished infiltration of the disciplinary gaze into the so-called private domain of the subject, thereby exposing *the private* as an inoperable concept. Just as writers have understood for some time now the fallacy of the classically contained body, so too the house—symbol of private, domestic space par excellence—must not be mistaken for an impenetrable fortress.[18] Beatriz Colomina writes more poetically of this phenomenon, using the picture window as her metaphor: "The picture window works two ways: it turns the outside world into an image to be consumed by those inside the house, but it also displays the image of the interior to that outside world."[19] While Colomina asserts that the two-way window does not necessarily indicate a loss of privacy—"we have all become 'experts' on our own representation"—she locates a structural deficiency within the perimeter; the dividing line between inside and out is interrupted by the window—a structure whose purpose is to enable visual passage across the borders.[20]

What we must conceptualize then, particularly in light of the information age of electronic communication, are conditions of permeability between the so-called private and public, which are unstable, unequal in force and power, and capable of movement along all sorts of axes. In other words, we must attend not only to how the State stepped up its invasion of the lives of its subjects using September 11th as its justification, but also how individuals have themselves taken hold of the event as a personal experience, and translated the attacks into a simultaneously national and individual wounding. Finally, we must interrogate the means by which the "threat of

terrorism"—read as a threat to the "American" way of life, including but not limited to the privacy and freedom of the individual—has enabled the US administration to crack down on public protests and anti-war demonstrations, under the guise of protecting the rights and freedoms of its citizens.[21]

Foucault wrote about this long ago, of course, in his study of panopticism and the disciplines. Describing discipline as "the distribution of individuals in space," Foucault articulates a complex of processes all contributing to a state in which individuals are subjected to conditions of potentially continuous surveillance.[22] Drawing on Jeremy Bentham's architectural model of the Panopticon, Foucault articulates this concept of a generalized panoptic power operating within and across the social body. Through analysis of various spatial practices of differentiation and observation, Foucault describes panopticism as an optics of power: "The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and recognize immediately....Visibility is a trap."[23] Such power is subtle. As subjects realize they are always potentially operating under an objectifying gaze, they begin to behave as though under constant surveillance:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.[24]

The threat of visibility is pervasive, making every pseudo-private zone into a potentially scrutinized space. Privacy becomes a mythic condition belonging to

memory, a nostalgic construct one imagines having possessed at another time, in another space, but not here.[25]

Anthrax Spores
Harvested from Unknown Source
Photographer's Name Withheld

One day my friend Nicola, while photographing a sign in the Hoboken, New Jersey train station, heard an eerily Orwellian voice come on over an invisible loudspeaker: "Lady with a Camera. Lady with a Camera." She looked up and around, but no one appeared to give face to the interruption; there was only the voice. Gathering her equipment together, she hurried up the stairs and out of the station. Nobody stopped her. When she emerged, out of breath, but unchallenged into daylight, she could not even be certain she hadn't imagined the entire event.

Postcard: *Lady with a Camera* Source: Author's Design

While increased measures of surveillance are especially obvious in liminal spaces—border crossings, airports, entrance into government buildings—the time since September 11th has seen a general increase in the observation of so-called private citizens. As Jonathan Crary, and Foucault before him, so brilliantly argue, the concept of visual culture is not simply the study of image-production but, more urgently, an analysis of the disciplines of observation and surveillance:

> Spectacle is not primarily concerned with a *looking at* images but rather with the construction of conditions that individuate, immobilize, and separate subjects, even within a world in which mobility and circulation are ubiquitous.[26]

Putting a different spin on the concept of imagining 9/11, the *spectacularity* of this event refers not only to the reams of images which resulted from the clicking of thousands of cameras, but also to the consequential governmental desires to observe and to categorize its citizens as either potential risks, or benign objects. "Problems with vision," Crary writes, "…[are] fundamentally questions about the body and the operation of social power."[27] Bodies walking through security gates, and shoes passing under x-ray eyes, elucidate that the diverse spectacular responses of State power all have as their prime directive the identification of risk.

For it wasn't simply a solidification of geographic lines dividing the US from its external enemies following September 11th, 2001. It was also a declaration of war on itself—on citizens and non-citizens—that took numerous forms of surveillance, detainment, and deportation, giving the lie to Bush's famous edict: *You are Either For US or Against US.* After all, the highjackers had been living in the United States, had taken flying lessons, had lived in suburban neighbourhoods, and had fooled everyone around them. They were a kind of virus, eating away at the system from inside. Their previously undetected presence inside the body of the nation suggested the presence of others, named "sleepers cells," requiring identification and neutralization. The contamination of the internal body must be detected and eliminated, but quietly…and in such a way as to make its *citizens* grateful.[28]

Here the postcard logic resonates: the card's limits are overrun by contamination, and its borders contain the suspicious elements that require elimination. The message these postcard-terrorists bring is one of dissension within the nation; operating as interior exteriorities the virus-terrorists explode structures on multiple levels. Literally, of course, the collapse of the towers signifies one such destruction; but terrorist presence within the nation's borders disrupts the US administration's rhetoric of a country unified against terrorism. Such a project, if attended to in all sincerity, would require an attack on American soil against its own leaders.

In the US, the famous *PATRIOT Act*, passed in the fall of 2001, constitutes the most obvious example. Short for *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism*, the *USA Patriot Act* stipulates two basic requirements for identifying and eliminating potential threats: 1) that the private be rendered public, and, 2) that the public realm of government be empowered to operate in private. As Elaine Scarry explains,

> The objective of the Patriot Act becomes even clearer if it is understood concretely as making the population *visible* and the Justice Department *invisible*. The Act inverts the constitutional requirement that people's lives be private and the work of government officials be public; it instead crafts a set of conditions that make our inner lives transparent and the workings of the government opaque.[29]

Violating alternately the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments, the Act defines the patriotic citizen as, essentially, a compliant and docile body.[30] Nothing pertaining to the individual is secure from potential seizure: federal officers may "enter and search a person's house, …survey private medical records, business records, library records, and educational records, and…monitor telephone, email, and Internet use."[31] However, the Act not only requires submission, it also demands citizen participation. Bankers are asked to report certain transactions to the authorities, and librarians must be willing to turn over records of books checked out by particular patrons. Refusal to comply may result in criminal or civil charges.[32]

In New York, the trickle-down effect remains in the form of so much signage admonishing everyone—citizens, residents, tourists, whomever—to be vigilant. Signs instructing everyone and anyone to *watch and report any suspicious behaviour* appear in public washrooms, subways, and on mailboxes. Sometimes examples are given—unidentified parcels left by strange individuals—but more often than not the definition of suspicious behaviour is notably absent, making anything and everyone potentially threatening. The question on both the micro and macro levels of life has become, then, how to identify your enemy. Proceeding from the process of panoptic internalization and the breakdown of oppositions between public and private, another kind of opposition asserts itself: identifying the enemy who is Other to both the self and the State. Under the Patriot Act, subjects agree to become the I/eye of the State, with a view to detecting the enemy terrorist. In this case, however, the enemy is also

a virus: a threat located within the nation's borders whose presence and intentions must be deciphered at all costs.

In the wake of all this governmental specularization, the postcard's message, *You Never Walk Alone*, acquires another, more alarming implication. In the US, privacy of the individual has become secondary to the ocular needs of the State. Working via an optics of fear propagated by media images of collapsing towers and suicidal terrorists, the Patriot Act capitalizes on terror in the name of national security. Citizens, residents, and aliens alike are called to support the war not only by exposing themselves to the technological invasion of their homes and bodies, but also to participate in the exposure of others. *You Never Walk Alone* is the State's promise to its people; it is a gift of constant, caring watchfulness—a paternalistic formulation par excellence. But gifts and promises are never free of charge. In the traditional sense, they designate a binding contract demanding compliance, docility, and participation on the part of its recipients, named here as an ambiguous You.

The Gift of Community

"Gift," as Marcel Mauss explains, bears two meanings: "*present* and *poison*."[33] He traces the connection between poison and present through the customary gift of drink in ancient German and Scandinavian societies. Writing that "the gift of drink . . .[is] the present par excellence," Mauss notes that the drink-present is always potentially a gift of poison: it "permanently links those who partake and is always liable to turn against one of them if he would fail to honour the law.[34] In the logic of gift-giving,

> the object received as a gift, the received object in general, engages, links magically, religiously, morally, juridically, the giver and the receiver. Coming from one person, made or appropriated by him, being from him, it gives him power over the other who accepts it.[35]

Gift-giving is an operation which binds forever the receiver to the giver: to give is also to take something and to receive is to become obligated. The gift establishes a circle of exchange which remains long after the passing of the original gift-event.[36]

Émile Benveniste describes the profoundly ambivalent meaning of gift-giving through etymological analysis, writing that "[i]n most Indo-European languages, 'to give' is expressed by a verb from the root *do- . . . . There seemed to be no possible doubt about the constancy of this signification until it was established that the Hittite verb da- meant not 'give' but 'take.'[37] Wryly commenting that this discovery "caused considerable confusion, which still lasts," Benveniste concludes that "*do- properly means neither 'take' nor 'give' but either one or the other, depending on the construction."[38]

Postcard: *Pledge of Allegiance* Source: http://www.thismodernworld.org/gra/wtccard4.jpg

The gift, therefore, operates as a binding contract between subjects; it engenders a promissory structure of obligation and indebtedness. In order for the contractual cycle to function, however, each participant must pledge to honour the promises made. The promissory subject, the subject of belonging—one might even say the citizen or the community member—is the subject that promises itself as stable, unchanging and reliable. To accept a gift is to agree to remember one's condition of indebtedness. In order to remember one's debt, the subject in question must first be able to remember him or herself: to recognize him or herself in the future as identical to the self in the past. As Nietzsche argues in his *Genealogy of*

Morality, memory, a counter-device to forgetfulness, is fundamental to this operation.[39] A promise is always a promise to remember, and the capacity for remembrance lies in the duration of the subject:

> That is precisely what constitutes the long history of the origins of *responsibility*. That particular task of breeding an animal which has the right to make a promise includes…as precondition and preparation, the more immediate task of first *making* man to a certain degree undeviating [notwendig], uniform, a peer amongst peers, orderly and consequently predictable.[40]

The citizen who promises to *remember* himself or herself in the future, when the promise comes due, such is the promissory subject necessary to the smooth operations of State surveillance.

Theological in its essence, Orwellian in its practice, the first postcard's message of hope, *You never walk alone*, interrupts its own act of consolation, explicitly signaling the operations of surveillance necessary to make good on such a promise.[41] It is the *Pledge* postcard, however, which makes explicit the circle of exchange to which Mauss refers in his discussion of gift-giving. As a promise to the State in the context of post-September 11th America, pledging allegiance to the flag constitutes no less than a signature on a McCarthy-esque contract of perpetual observation. On a postcard, however, the pledge's transmission acquires a viral quality. Split off from its traditional contexts of recitation—schools, official ceremonies, sports games, etc.—its unregulated dissemination highlights a disconnect

between the message (liberty and justice for all) and its arrival (liberty and justice for some).

A certain ambiguity regarding language—specifically, the language of community—is essential to the operation of these cards. Sent out to a "You" always watched over, and an "I" who pledges, these postal messages address themselves to an undifferentiated American. Accompanying the linguistic ambiguity, geographic lines are linguistically and optically drawn, enacting a series of divisions between inside and outside, member and non-member. Together, the caption and the photograph imagine an indivisible, homogeneous community against the backdrop of September 11th rubble. However, the "I" and the "You" demand careful interrogation, gesturing as they do towards a myth of national community which obscures the everyday violations of individual rights enacted against the apparently self-evident and protected group: *The American People*. The question is one of identification, and geography, like biology, is not destiny.

Postcard: *Anthrax Letters* Source: http://www.postalworkersonline.com/anamailer.htm

Anthrax Letters
File No. 1.3.75-9

Figure 1

Whenever the government announces another Orange alert, the NYPD are joined by representatives of the National Guard. Men, and the occasional woman, decked out in camouflage gear and packing assault rifles. Assault rifles in a subway underground? I blinked the first few times I saw them, but soon it too became almost farcical, like the regularly shifting colour-coded national security status-a kind of paint-by-numbers for measuring what the State calls "Intelligence." And always now, orange alert status or not, signs are posted inside subway cars and on the streets, imploring citizens to watch for any suspicious activity, and report it to the proper authorities.

Postcard: *Alert Codes* Source: Author's Design

Traditional notions of community are fundamentally concerned with subjectivization, with producing reliable, recognizable promissory subjects. According to Jean-Luc Nancy, communitarian logic is mythically bound up with ideals of purity, seamlessness and homogeneity. Nancy stresses the inseparability of mythology from traditional formulations of community, arguing that:

> mythic speech is communitarian in its essence . . . Myth arises only from a community and for it: they engender one another, infinitely and immediately . . . Myth is always the myth of community, that is to say, it is always the myth of a communion—the unique voice of the many—capable of inventing and sharing the myth. [42]

Placing its subjects into categories of belonging and non-belonging, the communitarian myth is "totalitarian in its content, for its content is always a communion, or rather all communions."[43] Galvanized by a desire for fusion and homogeneity, the communitarian vision is founded in fictions of recognition and reliability. It is above all a myth of The Proper in which the inside is always distinct from the outside. Representing itself as "full, original speech," myth gives the truth of a community to itself.[44]

For Nancy, mythology is bound up with totalitarianism through its narratives of fusion and communion. Citing the Nazi example and the inextricability of myth from power, Nancy argues that the "idea of myth alone perhaps presents the very Idea of the West, with its perpetual representation of the compulsion to return to its own sources in order to re-engender itself from them as the very destiny of humanity."[45] In the case of September 11th, 2001, the destiny of humanity is pictured as the special responsibility of a united and powerful America.

President George W. Bush's statements to the nation since the attacks continually return to a communitarian vision in which America recognizes the events of September 11th as the inauguration of a mission from God: "Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."[46] Giving Americans an explanation for the events based upon national identity—"America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world"—Bush focuses that identity into a project for the future:

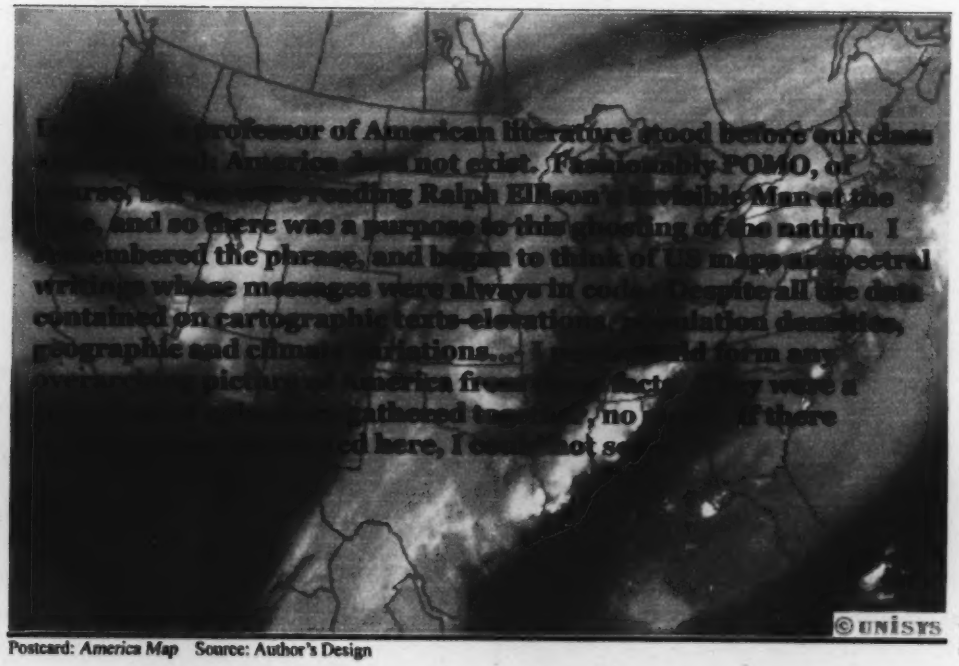
> Our unity is a kinship of grief, and a steadfast resolve to prevail against our enemies. And this unity against terror is now extending across the world. America is a nation full of good fortune, with so much to be grateful for. But we are not spared from suffering. In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America, because we are freedom's home and defender. And the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time.[47]

Mourning constitutes the basis for unity, and fuels the project of war. Mourning is translated into a historical project; "it makes a place for the dead" so that the living can imagine the future.[48]

Recapitulating the cycle of gift and obligation, the project of history similarly mirrors the passage of a postcard from dispatch to arrival. As Michel de Certeau writes: "'To mark' a past is to make a place for the dead, but also to redistribute the space of possibility, to determine negatively *what must be done*, and consequently use the narrativity that buries the dead as a way of establishing a place for the living....[history] establishes a didactic relation between the sender and the receiver."[49] The official message entombed for history is of a traumatized nation roused to action through memory of its obligations to both the past (founding fathers) and the future (global freedom).

Of course the constitution of a wounded but resilient nation requires the presence of an evil other against which the shape of America comes into focus. Bush formulates his vision of Good and Evil in terms of a kind of border, and calls upon all

nations to choose sides in his binary universe: "Now is the time to draw the line in the sand against the evil ones," and, more famously, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."[50] First comes America, then come all nations allied with America. But the *You* and the *Us*, replicating the *I* and the *You* of the commemorative postcards, call attention to themselves through their very non-specificity. The visual proximity of Us to US(A) articulates an American unity which begins to fragment when brought in for closer inspection. In so doing, the lines and borders of America collapse inwards, exposing the State's promise of protection and justice for all as contingent and disingenuous, a lie which has nevertheless been in operation since the nation's inception.[51]



Postcard: *America Map* Source: Author's Design

By November, 2001, more than 1000 inhabitants, mostly immigrants, had been taken into custody.[52] Many of the detainees were arrested during their attempts to comply with Attorney General Ashcroft's newly implemented national registration program, deployed under the PATRIOT Act.[53] Information detailing the fates of these detainees has been very difficult to acquire; the Administration has consistently refused to release the names of detainees, the criminal charges, if any, leveled against them, or any records of court proceedings.[54] From a report published on June 2, 2003, by the Justice Department's Inspector General, however, details began to emerge:

> ...762 Arab and Muslim noncitizens were summarily detained, sometimes for many months, regardless of the evidence in individual cases. Some were arrested in chance encounters or on flimsy leads, but all were sucked into the FBI's September 11-related investigation. Most were never charged with a crime, but rather found to lack proper immigration status. Not one was charged in relation to the terrorism probe.[55]

Information regarding the treatment of these detainees while in custody is similarly disturbing. Denied due process, detainees waited an average of eighty days, and up to eight months, for the FBI to proceed with deportation.[56] Despite the absence of criminal charges, many prisoners were shackled for twenty-three hours per day, subject to a variety of physical and psychological abuses.[57] The ironies are legion. America, the home and defender of freedom, uncannily resembles those nations it accuses of brutality and tyranny: "It's wholly unprecedented for our government to

lock up 1000 people and not say why or where they're being held....to have it as a blanket policy is a practice we associate with totalitarian governments. It's the practice of disappearance."[58] It is also the State body turned in on itself; the host attacking its own system, and exposing in the process the profound ambivalences contained in its promises of protection to the nation.

Given all the measures implemented following September 11th intended to detect and distinguish the true American from the virus, Bush's rhetoric of freedom and democracy disrupts his own communitarian vision. Reading the devastation of that day as a message from God regarding the nation's destiny and obligation to history, the US administration has ensured that the memory of 9/11 will forever be bound to ongoing war campaigns with their collateral (civilian) damage, and violations of human rights both domestic and abroad.[59] Memory is not permitted to remain among the bodies and the ash. Made to function as a message from the future, memory is armed for war.

You Must Remember This...

Less than one month after the collapse of the World Trade Center, letters containing anthrax arrived in multiple locations over the course of several weeks. Five people died, at least eighteen others contracted the bacteria, and thousands of others have tested positive for exposure.[60] While the FBI was able to trace the anthrax-laced letters back through various human carriers and postal depots, conclusive proof of their temporal and geographic origins has never been broadcast.[61]

The earliest reported date associated with the anthrax scare is October 5th, 2001—the date of the first death.[62]

Operating literally as a viral carrier, the US postal system's promise to deliver through snow, sleet, wind, and rain acquired a sinister edge. The message which arrived, along with the deadly spores, is one of insecurity and danger: one can never be certain what might arrive through the mail, or when it will have been posted. Calling both the past and the future into question, the arrival of contaminated mail promises only that we do not know what is on the way. Two weeks after the first death, *The Guardian* reported that the US government intended to mail postcards "describing how to identify suspicious mail…to every household in America."[63] The future, ambiguously laced with the memories of what has come before, arrives as a message which we are not yet able to decipher. While the attacks have and will continue to be read in stunningly diverse manners (as triumph, as disaster, as war…), the ways in which the US Administration has chosen to read September 11th will undoubtedly return to haunt the world. They are sending a gift into the future with these wars and detainments, surveillances and deportations. What exchanges or debts these acts will have incurred remains to be seen.[64]

[1] Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," 93.
[2] Derrida, *The Postcard*, 185.
[3] Stewart, *On Longing*, 137-38.
[4] I use "fundamental" here in the same sense that Derrida names the trace the "arche-trace" or "arche-differance"—to name originary difference and undecideability.
[5] Ibid., 138.
[6] Ibid.,13.
[7] Shaviro, "Two Lessons from Burroughs," 40.
[8] Ibid., 41.
[9] Ibid., 40.
[10] I take the phrase from Avital Ronell's work on philosophy and contamination. Using the telephone as a means of interrogating notions of origin, destination, and immunity, Ronell writes: "The telephone connection houses the improper. Hitting the streets, it welcomes linguistic pollutants and reminds you to ask: 'Have I been understood?'" These same concerns apply equally to the postcard and its messages. See: Ronell, "The Worst Neighborhoods of the Real," 225.
[11] All of the postcards reproduced here were taken from various Internet sites.
[12] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 97.
[13] Derrida, *The Postcard*, 23.
[14] Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 82. Colomina is quoting Jonathan Crary's work in *Techniques of the Observer*.
[15] Derrida, *The Postcard*, 12.
[16] Ibid., 37. Such a state recapitulates the terror's of Kafka's *The Castle*, in which endless documentation provides horrific, bureaucratic control through a system of infernal desire machines. A compulsive repetition of information-gathering.
[17] Derrida, *The Postcard*, 185.
[18] Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of the classical and grotesque bodies in *Rabelais and His World* offers a succinct description. While the classical body is imagined as fixed, complete and self-contained, the grotesque body "is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world." Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 26.
[19] Colomina, 8.
[20] Ibid., 8.
[21] I would like to acknowledge Mark Simpson here, who suggested to me that publicity itself came under attack after September 11th. In this sense, the rhetoric of *privacy*, *the American way of life*, and *protecting our freedoms* can be seen as emblems of the neo-liberal State, emblems which work to justify the suppression of "counter-public life." See Michael Warner's essay, "Publics and Counterpublics" for a discussion of counterpublics.
[22] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 141. Writing specifically about Jeremy Bentham's architectural model for the Panopticon, Foucault notes: "the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." (201)
[23] Ibid., 200.
[24] Ibid., 202-203.
[25] Despite the pervasiveness of panoptic mechanisms, Foucault suggests that we continue to regard certain divisions between the State and the private subject as intact:

> perhaps our life is still governed by a certain number of oppositions that remain inviolable, that our institutions and practices have not yet dared to break down. These are oppositions that we regard as simply givens: for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and the space of work. (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 230.)

What Foucault's analysis of panoticism suggests, however, is that the classic distinctions between the public (agora) and the private (domestic realm) are anything but discrete spaces or stable zones. The September 11th commemorative postcards highlight the extent to which these oppositions are not inviolable at all, but exist primarily as imaginary constructs. The State is able to capitalize on this instability. While the panoptic principle seems to desire sheer transparency, it reserves within itself the capacity for privacy, or interiority, to emerge. Subjectivity thus becomes defined by a balance of visibility and precious secrecy—the private business of the individual. While the contents of this precious kernel remain beyond the purview of State surveillance, its existence *as such* becomes a mechanism for control. Because the existence of this kernel of privacy has become a defining element of American subjectivity, and therefore an element in need of protection by the State, it becomes co-opted by the rhetoric of terrorism and defense.

[26] Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*. 74. See also: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

[27] Crary, "Modernity and the Problem of the Observer," 3.

[28] How eerily does this resonate with Foucault's discussion in *Discipline and Punish*? In a French town at the close of the seventeenth century, government officials responded to the threat of the plague with extreme measures: segmentation, inspection, and perpetual surveillance:

> The plague-stricken town provided an exceptional disciplinary model: perfect, but absolutely violent; to the disease that brought death, power opposed its perpetual threat of death; life inside it was reduced to its simplest expression; it was, against the power of death, the meticulous exercise of the right of the sword. (207)

For the American administration after September 11th, terrorism enabled the same level of surveillance, with minimal protest and much gratitude from its subjects, as enacted during this plague. The movements of September 11th commemorative postcards provide an illustration of Foucault's description of self-subjection, suggesting some of the means by which the terrorist attacks in New York have been internalized and transformed into so much fuel for national disciplines of State and self-surveillance.

[29] Scarry, "Acts of Resistance," 16.

[30] Ibid., 16.

[31] Ibid., 17.

[32] Ibid., 19.

[33] Mauss, "Gift, Gift," 28.

[34] Ibid., 30.

[35] Ibid., 29-30.

[36] See also Derrida's analysis of the gift-event in *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*.

[37] Benveniste, "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary," 34.

[38] Ibid., 34.

[39] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 39.

[40] Ibid., 39.

[41] I take the concept of "interruption" from Jean-Luc Nancy's work in *The Inoperable Community*, a piece I will address more carefully in the following sections.

[42] Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, 50-51.

[43] Ibid., 57.

[44] Ibid., 48.

[45] Ibid., 46. See Nancy's articulation of "singular beings" in *The Inoperative Community*, and Giorgio Agamben's notion of the quodlibet—the whatever being—in *The Coming Community* for alternative concepts of subject-State interaction. Each imagines a "subject" distinct from traditional categories of identification. Reformulating the concept of "Belonging," they disrupt discourses of rights, citizenships, the categories "race," "nation," "sex" . . . In short, the singular-whatever being poses an insurmountable threat to practices of identification, or what Derrida repeatedly refers to as the violence inherent in naming.

[46] The White House, "President's Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance." 14 September, 2001.

[47] Ibid.
[48] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 100
[49] Ibid., 100.
[50] The White House, "President Unveils 'Most Wanted' Terrorists." 10 October, 2001; "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People." 20 September, 2001.
[51] I am referring, of course, to the dependence upon slavery and indentured labour for the birth of the nation.
[52] Craft, "The Official Story: Government Gives no Information on Detainees," 7-13 November, 2001.
[53] By November, 2001, Attorney General Ashcroft "had set a schedule for males age 16 and older, with immigrant visas from 21 mostly Muslim countries and North Korea, to be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed or else face criminal charges or deportation. When hundreds reported to INS offices in Southern California to meet a December 16 deadline, they were handcuffed, whisked into custody, and in some cases shipped to distant prisons for lack of local space." (Lee, "Immigrant Roundup," 25-31 December, 2002.)
[54] Lee, "Bracing for Bush's War at Home," 26 March—1 April, 2003.
[55] Lee, "Exposé Energizes Court Battle," 16-22 July, 2003.
[56] Lee Gelernt, the lead immigration lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, stated in September, 2002 that the "overwhelming number of these immigrant detainees—if not all of them—have only actually been found guilty of visa violations or other immigration violations, and they have not been linked to terrorism." (Lee, "Open-and-Shut Cases," 4-10 September, 2002)
[57] Ibid.
[58] Craft, "The Official Story."
[59] For a recent accounting of these abuses, see the latest *Amnesty International* Report, available online at: http://www.amnesty.org/
[60] Staff and Agencies, "Army cautious over Anthrax Match," 17 December, 2001.
[61] It would be naïve to imagine the FBI has made public all its information regarding these events. While a number of letters are believed to have originated from somewhere in Florida, others appear to have been mailed from out of country, as far away as Malaysia. Mimicking Al Qaeda sleeper cells, the anthrax letters have no home base, and leave only traces of their history behind.
[62] As Robin McKie reports, "Bob Stevens was a journalist for American Media group at its headquarters in Boca Raton, Florida, when he became ill last week. At first his flu-like symptoms were thought to be those of meningitis. Only after he died was it realized he had contracted anthrax, the first person in the US to die of the disease since 1976." (McKie, "The Killer that Comes in the Post," 14 October, 2001)
[63] Gillan, "Anthrax Hits Office of Second TV Newsman," 19 October, 2001. While I have so far been unable to confirm whether any of these postcards were mailed, the intentions to do so suffice for my purposes here.
[64] Stealing from Derrida, the use of the future anterior refers to that particular temporal zone in which we are currently located—a kind of liminal between in which we cannot yet read the significance of events: "The future can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger. It is that which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity. For that future world and for that within it which will have put into question the values of sign, word, and writing, for that which guides our future anterior, there is as yet no exergue." (*Of Grammatology*, 5)

The Face of a Terrorist

If I see someone [who] comes in that's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over.[1]

–US Representative John Cooksey, R-Monroe.

The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence[2]

–Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense

From the beginning of all this, or rather, from the moment on September 11th, 2001, when we in the West began to understand the realities of our geographical insecurities, there has been a problem with the materialization of invisibility, and with the related processes of enemy identification. As Mary Gordon wrote in *The New York Times* within a week of the attacks, "To have an enemy with no name and therefore no face, or even worse, a name and face that can only be guessed at, is the stuff of nightmare."[3] Composed during the shock of those first days, Gordon's words evoke the uncertainty and the distress experienced by thousands of North Americans who never imagined such an attack was possible; never conceived such horrors could occur on this side of the Atlantic.[4] But Gordon's phrasing also signals the absolute threat to the State posed by a being masquerading without the proper identification, a being without a recognizable face or name.

Giorgio Agamben describes this threat of the non-faced being in *The Coming Community*, writing: "For the State . . . what is important is never the singularity as such, but only its inclusion in some identity, whatever identity (but the possibility of the *whatever* itself being taken up without an identity is a threat the State cannot come to terms with)."[5] Not unlike nineteenth century approaches, contemporary

intelligence practice looks to names and faces in order to provide this sought-after identity. And, therefore, in addition to the US Administration's official policies of surveillance over the past three years, the solution to this "stuff of nightmare" has been overwhelmingly simple: give the enemy a mug and a moniker. The rest will follow. Just what precisely this rest is, constitutes the focus of this chapter.[6]

Soon after September 11th, we were given the names of Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Although neither bin Laden nor his associates have ever used the term in (any intercepted) communiqués, *Al Qaeda* has been the Western media's name of choice for bin Laden and his organization since 1996.[7] With the Trade Center attacks in 2001, Al Qaeda emerged as "the primary signifier for terror."[8] Operating outside any recognizable structural framework, the organization exists as:

> a virtual state, a borderless but global network of alliances that, nonetheless, possesses many of the attributes of a real state—an army and intelligence corps, a complex social structure, a treasury and forms of economic exchange, a health, education and welfare system, and, significantly, effective communications and propaganda.[9]

As Arundhati Roy remarked early on, the supposedly hard evidence linking Osama bin Laden to the September 11th attacks was never made public; what we have instead is the word of the U.S. and British governments. Released on October 4th, 2001 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the report documenting bin Laden's involvement states at the outset that:

> This document does not purport to provide a prosecutable case against Usama Bin Laden in a court of law. Intelligence often cannot be used evidentially, due both to the strict rules of admissibility and to the need to protect the safety of sources. But on the basis of all the information available HMG is confident of its conclusions as expressed in this document.[10]

While the report documents bin Laden's involvement in numerous earlier terrorist activities, no conclusive evidence is offered to the general public of his direct involvement with the attacks of 2001.[11] As Roy suggests, "[f]rom what is known about the location of Bin Laden and the living conditions in which he operates, it's entirely possible that he did not personally plan and carry out the attacks—that he is the inspirational figure, 'the CEO of the holding company.'"[12] As the face of terrorism, he has been positioned in the crosshairs of a scope claiming to seek only his eradication, while actively cultivating a state of perpetual war.

Facial Developments

A face, of course, is never simply a face. That anatomical structure located at the crown of the body with multiple orifices and capacities for sensory perception has come to operate as a limit or border-zone dividing outside from inside. The face carries the weight of presence; it is a marker of identity, an event of Being perceived as more or less readable by observing eyes.[13] Michael Taussig describes conventional readings of the face as:

> the figure of *appearance*, the appearance of appearance, the figure of figuration, the ur-appearance, if you will, of secrecy itself as the primordial act of presencing. For the face itself is a contingency, at the magical crossroads of mask and window to the soul, one of the better-kept public secrets essential to everyday life.[14]

Both formulations, mask and window, imagine a subject hiding somewhere, a subject that can be penetrated and known. As mask, the fact of deception indicates a concealed interior truth. As window, one set of orifices in particular—the eyes—serve as a channel to the internal essence.

The eyes have become the most significant aspect of the modern face and its connection to subject-effects in Western thought. Johannes Fabian describes this primacy of vision—what he names *visualism*—as "a cultural, ideological bias toward vision as the 'noblest sense.'"[15] The noble eyes are conceived as the most reliable tool for observing and understanding the Other.[16] Nobility, with its etymological ties to aristocracy and dignity, evokes the concept of civilization and cultural development. Eyes belong to the civilized. Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of Enlightenment thinking links Western obsessions with the identification of Otherness to this visual dependence; a dependence which always ironically relies upon the erection of priapic blind spots.

Comparing sight to smell, they write: "Of all the senses, that of smell—which is attracted without objectifying—bears clearest witness to the urge to lose oneself in

and become the 'other....' When we see we remain what we are; but when we smell we are taken over by otherness."[17] As opposed to the animism enabled through smell, vision presumes to distance itself from its object. Whilst the face operates as magical border dividing the supposed inside from its outside, vision enables the conceit of a Self with integrity and continuity. *We remain what we are*. Unlike the smelly primitives–the sense of smell is considered a disgrace in civilization, the sign of lower social strata, lesser races and base animals–vision is rational, reliable, and objective.[18] And vision, moreover, provides the medium for interrogating the faces of others.

From the nineteenth century on, vision has in fact constituted part of the equipment used to interrogate faces and their subterranean essences. The camera completes this partnership in detection. Deployed by artists, race scientists, and criminologists, photography has been used to "inscribe the body's surface with an imagined depth—an ephemeral essence, a gendered and racialized character."[19] Massive photographic archives were assembled for the purposes of identifying criminal types since, as the theory went, "it was only on the basis of mutual comparison, on the basis of the tentative construction of a larger, 'universal' archive, that zones of deviance and respectability could be clearly demarcated."[20] While bodily measurements of all kinds were recorded—foot size, ear shape, fingerprint—the face and the head were of special importance.[21] Even Benjamin noted their importance, writing: "[s]udden shifts in power such as are now overdue in our society can make the ability to read facial types a matter of vital importance. Whether one is of the left or right, one will have to get used to being looked at in terms of one's

provenance. And one will have to look at others in the same way."[22] Eerily prescient, Benjamin's remarks continue to resound in ways that are indebted to the camera and its mechanics of technical reproduction.[23] This history of the "mug" shot provides one such example of this imbrication of face with lens.

First brought to the U.S. from France in the late nineteenth century, the mug shot radically transformed the American penal system and its practices of social surveillance.[24] Keeping in step with the supposed "democratizing" force of photography via its potential for reproduction, the mug shot was not limited to police stations or government files; it was actively disseminated to the broader public.[25] The Rogues Gallery of criminal types was one such site established for public viewing. Dependent upon observers gazing hard at the images in order to recognize the displayed faces as indicative of an internal criminal essence, the practice operates fundamentally as a disciplinary technique:

> The message implicitly addressed to viewers of a published Rogues' Gallery was that they needed to discipline their gazes in order to protect themselves, their loved ones, their property, and the state. Ultimately, the circulation of mug shots in the Rogues' Gallery trained the larger social body to scrutinize itself in search of deviant behavior...[26]

What these mug shot archives produced, however, was an equation of criminality with non-caucasoid features. Criminals were identified by experts as akin to

primitive beings, thereby "conflating the terms of race and criminal behavior into the same position along an imagined biological time line."[27] While the technologies of dissemination have changed since the early days of Rogues Galleries, mug shots continue to circulate according to logics of fear and discipline. And in the wake of September 11th, their racial biases have been resurrected with a vengeance.

On October 10th, 2001, President George W. Bush unveiled the *Most Wanted Terrorist* list at the FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Photographs, names, and descriptions of twenty-two wanted men were affixed to a giant poster board, and proudly displayed as the administration's "new line of attack against terrorism."[28]

FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists Source: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011010-3.html

Hailing the list as a modest but crucial initiative in his war against terror, Bush deployed the language of darkness and light—of photography, in other words—to illuminate its significance: "Terrorists try to operate in the shadows. They try to hide. But we're going to shine the light of justice on them. We list their names, we publicize their pictures, we rob them of their secrecy. Terrorism has a face, and today

we expose it for the world to see."[29] *Terrorism has a face*. No longer simply an activity or a concept, but a secret essence discernible in the lines of a face, in its bone structure, its hair, and most of all, in its eyes.

But these wanted men—and they are all men; this must be highlighted from the outset, for the absence of women across the board in political and popular imaginations of terrorism is fundamental to the operations of identification we are dealing with—are no great revelation either to the US security officers or to the politicians. The sole American, for example, is wanted in connection with the 1993 Trade Center bombing. Bin Laden, the first on the inventory, has been charged with a long list of crimes predating September 11th.[30] The now infamous intelligence report delivered to President Bush on August 6th, 2001, entitled "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S." indicates his pre 9/11 notoriety. And if terrorism likes to hide in the shadows, the likelihood that one of these men will be spotted at a local supermarket by a vigilant citizen is extremely low. Who, then, are these official FBI images for; or rather, what kinds of discursive operations does the photographic list enable?

Bill Brown terms this approach—asking what kind of work a thing carries out, rather than seeking its essence— a kind of "methodological fetishism."[31] Attending not to "whether things are but what work they perform….Methodological fetishism…is not an error so much as a condition for thought, new thoughts about how inanimate objects constitute human subjects, how they move them, how they threaten them, how they facilitate or threaten their relation to other subjects." In this

sense, the FBI list operates as a template for terrorist identification: non-white, non-English speaking, usually non-American, and always male.

Of the twenty-two terrorists on the FBI's list, only one, operating under the aliases Abdul Rahman Said Yasin, Aboud Yasin, Abdul Rahman S. Taha, and Abdul Rahman S. Taher, is an American citizen. An American citizen with a non-Indo-European name whose language is indicated as *Unknown*. An American, in other words, easily identified as an alien. Although my focus in this chapter is primarily on the relation between identity and facialization, the importance of naming to this process must not be overlooked. Giving names, like giving faces, must be understood as part and parcel of the same process of identification, both of which are power-laden and libidinally charged. The example cited above—naming Bin Laden without providing the public with reliable evidence—illuminates the irresolvable complexities with which we are faced in this so-called war against terror. How do we recognize evidence? What, in fact, constitutes evidence, particularly when the government dishing it out is notorious for its Janus-faced deceptions?

Derrida has written extensively about the violence of naming and identification. Asserting in his analysis of Lévi-Strauss' "Writing Lesson," that "[t]here was in face a first violence to be named," Derrida describes the imbrications of anthropology, identification, and violations of the Other.[32] Violation is given a specifically sexual connotation in Derrida's discussion of the interloper-anthropologist who infiltrates a game of young girls for the purposes of observation:

> The battle of proper names follows the arrival of the foreigner.... It is the anthropologist who violates a virginal space so accurately connoted by the scene of a...game played by little girls. The mere presence of the foreigner, the mere fact of having his eyes open, cannot not provoke a violation....Violence appears only at the moment when the intimacy of proper names can be opened to forced entry.[33]

This enmeshing of sex and the proper name, hearkening back to that old story of Adam naming in the Garden while Eve was busy eating, already suggests a missing piece from the FBI's puzzling list of names: where is Woman and why is she absent from this economy of terrorism? Her absence flits in and out of focus in this paper, but her presence in these images has been absolutely annihilated.

Concerning the American terrorist, one could easily argue that the proliferation of aliases exposes the movements of différance in language; that, as Derrida has written, "proper names are already no longer proper names, because their production is their obliteration...because the proper name has never been, as the unique appellation reserved for the presence of a unique being, anything but the original myth of a transparent legibility present under the obliteration..." (109). Accordingly, his list of aliases suggests an essential instability, and paints the picture of a chameleon-like being whose movements are unpredictable and unclassifiable. Instead of constituting one more victory for the laws of dissemination, however, I would argue that the US administration has manipulated all these unknown factors to their advantage. Here is a being who could be anywhere at anytime, nominally

unknowable and frighteningly untraceable. His American citizenship haunts the general population with the thought: what if he's here, in my city? This unknown American alien represents another opportunity for the US government to drive home the nation's insecurity in order to pass anti-constitutional bills, like the Patriot Act, effectively violating civil rights in an uncanny repetition of the violations incurred through naming.

The remaining twenty-one men on the FBI list hail from various countries in Africa and the Middle East. When complexion is noted on these rap sheets, it is alternately *olive*, *dark*, or *black*. Caucasian terrorists either do not exist, or do not pose a serious threat to US security. In the case of Caucasian Americans like John Walker Lindh—a convert to Islam and supporter of the Taliban—the solution is to re-name and re-charactize the subject in question. Thus, the American citizen becomes the "American Taliban," whose connection to "suburban hip hop and exposure to black literary classics" is cited as explanation for his otherwise unfathomable behaviour.[34]

As supplement, the addition of "Taliban" to "American" both substitutes for and adds to this identity, radically transforming the unintelligible anti-patriot into a would-be terrorist via the overwhelming power of the libidinal energies of blackness.[35] In photographs published of Lindh following his capture, the generic conventions of racial typing are unmistakable. Looking alternately psychotic, dirty, and dark-skinned, the transformation of a white American into an unclean Eastern savage is near perfect. Lindh is not simply pictured as deranged and foreign, but also

as a neutralized threat. The images of Lindh in captivity emphasize his impotence—his emasculation—as much as his Otherness. Emasculation is another compulsively repeated theme in the American imagination. Historically paired with anxieties over race, its visual precedents lie in countless lynching photographs.[36] Such images give face to innumerable attempts to castrate the mythic sexual potency of the black man supposedly threatening American white womanhood.[37]

John Walker Lindh
Source: http://universitypress.info

John Walker Lindh
Source: http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/lind-a03.shtml

John Walker Lindh
Source: http://nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0203/life/html

John Walker Lindh
Source: http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/News/Newsletter/16.mortensen.html

How similar to those images of the captured Saddam Hussein we saw in 2003. Disheveled, dirty, and publicly subjected to the authority of medical examiners, Hussein was stripped of his former authority and exposed to humiliating treatment. Time and again we saw doctors combing through his hair, looking for lice or ticks or other signs of contagion. By concentrating the spotlight on these medical procedures, television and print media simply reinforced the pathologization of both Hussein and Lindh as insane, delusional, and mentally unstable. No surprise that the depiction of mental imbalance proved so successful in each instance, for we in the West have a long history of linking psychological illness with so-called primitive man.[38] Freud's analysis in *Totem and Taboo* takes as its starting point the assumption that "a comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples, as it is taught by social anthropology, and the psychology of neurotics, as it has been revealed by psycho-analysis, will be bound to show numerous points of agreement and will throw new light upon familiar facts in both sciences."[39] Much of what follows here begins from a similar assumption: that the ways in which the terrorist has been imagined since September 11th constitute nothing so much as a re-hashing of Western attitudes towards race and sex which have been active since at least the nineteenth century.[40]

Above, the final image of Lindh illustrates this repetition compulsion literally. Sitting on a pillow against a stylized pseudo-Islamic background, with his dark, dirty face partially covered by turban and robes, the inside has come out. No longer simply a case of mimesis gone wrong, he now *is* this Other. Morphogenesis through photo-doctoring. And who can miss the parallel between medical doctors examining the

level of his contamination, to the idiomatic expression given to contemporary image-modification? Photo-doctoring: a commonplace practice amongst the computer literate involving selection, cropping, pasting, moveable colour bars, and myriad special effects. Doctored images; doctored bodies. Not quite a discipline, nor properly the return of the repressed, but an operation plugging into latent fantasies and ideas, letting them run amok in the virtual universe. As Michael Taussig writes,

> It is the cut of de/facement that releases this [revelatory] surplus, the cut into wholeness as holiness that, in sundering, reveals, as with film montage, not only another view via another frame, but released flows of energy….If it is the cut that makes the energy in the system both visible and active, then we should also be aware of cuts in language, strange accidents and contingencies…[41]

…and, I am arguing, the cuts in manipulated photographs. While performing these acts of digital manipulation does not constitute a discipline in itself, the result is an unmistakable disciplining *of* bodies.[42]

The FBI board of mug shots constitutes one such example of disciplining. The selection, framing, and captioning of these images combine to produce a raced and sexed version of terrorism. Manufacturers, journalists, and ordinary citizens have responded by providing their own—doctored—versions of the face of terrorism. The resulting pictures circulating online and in newspaper tabloids make explicit—expose, if you will—the latent assumptions within the FBI's seemingly respectable catalogue. Alternately violent, always masculinist, these unofficial and uncollected

images depict the game of hide and seek the terrorist as fundamentally a game between men.

All images included in this chapter have been culled from the virtual universe. Such media, like tabloid journalism, have traditionally been dismissed by pop culture critics as examples of Bakhtinian carnivalesque, in which all social and political hierarchies and prohibitions are temporarily suspended.[43] In this topsy-turvy universe, the grotesque aesthetic and carnival laughter reign supreme. Along with the wine, the imagination and speech are freed up to flow without inhibition.[44] Such readings, which imagine these media as sites of escape or difference from bourgeois ideology, fail to account for similarities in the discursive imagination between "official" and "popular" media. As Mark Driscoll argues, we need to

> mark the seemingly instrumental suturing of the popular to the globopathic and globocidal U.S. geopolitics....[C]onsumers read the tabloids, attend sporting events, surf the Net, peruse *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*, watch TV, and experience this not as a series of epistemological fractures...but as the veritable media lifeworld of subjects in the global North.[45]

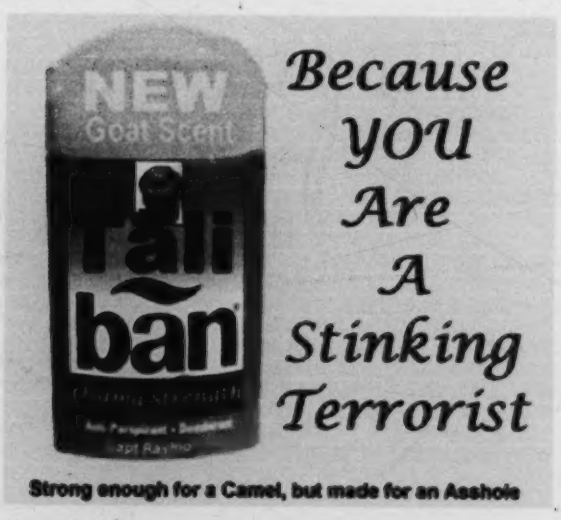
What follows are some examples of this globopathic and globocidal imagination, which give the terrorist's face by plugging into historically US anxieties over race and sex.[46]

Osama and Empire State Building
Source: http://www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.as;?cid=346

Osama with phallic head
Source: http:/www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.asp?cid=346

Imperialism and anal rape (he is penetrated by the Empire State building), effeminization ("You like skyscrapers, huh bitch?"), and the sprouting penis-head (dick-head) are consistent themes in modified images of Osama—the official *Head* of Terrorism since September 11th, 2001.[47] This hypersexualization makes bin Laden into a modern primitive: a being driven by a libidinal, phallic instinct which has overpowered all rational thought. Evoking Bataille's famous solar anus, bin Laden's penis head resembles nothing so much as a giant pineal gland dwarfing all potential for civilization.[48]

Recalling Horkheimer and Adorno's discussion of the elevation of sight and the debasement of smell, yet another set of related themes emerge from these images: animality and bestiality.



Osama deodorant
Source: http://www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.asp?cid=346

Freud argues early on in his work that all of repression emerges from this rerouting of smell into vision. Writing to Fleiss in 1897, he theorizes:

> I have often suspected that something organic played a part in repression; I was able once before to tell you that it was a question of the abandonment of former sexual zones....in my case the notion was linked to the changed part played by sensations of smell: upright carriage adopted, nose raised from the ground, at the same time a number of formerly interesting sensations attached to the earth becoming repulsive.... (He turns up his nose = he regards himself as something peculiarly noble.) Now, the zones which no longer produce a release of sexuality in normal and mature human beings must be the regions of the anus and of the mouth and throat.... In animals these sexual zones continue in force...if this persists in human beings too, perversion results.[49]

Once again, nobility and smell are at odds. As opposed to properly developed human beings, animals remain bound to anal and oral eroticism and smell. Only the most perverse Homo erectus exhibits continued attachment to anality and odour-producing zones on the body. Such a being operates on par with Freud's analysis of the primitive savage.

Osama and goat Source: http://www.bobaugust.com/osamapictures.htm

Osama and camel Source: http://www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.asp?cid=346

What emerges from all this developmental discourse has been captured with remarkable specificity in these images: the compulsive repetition of Osama's anal preoccupations; his proximity to animality through both immersion (in a camel's asshole) and bestiality; his overwhelming connection to libidinal energy, and his repugnant body odour. All of these photos, in other words, plug into long-standing anxieties over civilization (read: Western Enlightenment) and its Other—the primitive savage from the East. It is the introduction of other faces—specifically American faces—into these images, however, which complicate matters. Positing certain relations while eliminating others altogether, these polymorphously perverse couples highlight a certain transference of US racial anxiety on to the body of the terrorist. This is also where the project of giving a name and a face to terror begins to turn in on itself, further exposing a fundamental fascism at work beneath the mask of patriotic right and virtue.

Osama and President Bush Source: http://www.rajunbju.com/elat/osamabinladen.htm

Gangsta Bush: white face with the desires and dick of a black man, proving his weapon to be longer and stronger than his bitch's. Strictly between men, but not exactly a straight homosexual coupling; what we have are two men, one penis, and one gun standing in for a penis which, presumably, isn't up to the job. Race is confused in this image: W is depicted as white on top and black underneath—does his face conceal an interior truth?—while bin Laden remains the quintessentially bearded and turbaned Middle Eastern man.

But here...

Osama and President Bush II Source: http://www.home.no/lunders/bilder/humor/bilder_diverse.html

How can W be on the top and the bottom? Here the passivity of Bush and the gentleness of bin Laden suggest a far more consensual partnership than the earlier

images of rape and violence; almost as though Osama was giving Bush something he wants, something he can use. It is by now well documented that many of the domestic and foreign policies enacted in the name of September 11th were on the table long before the attacks. Bush wanted Iraq, and he wanted to extend American control over the Middle East more generally, at least as early as 1997, when the *Project for a New American Century* was drafted by key members of his family and current administration. Among a long list of recognizable and powerful names, Jeb Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz each signed off on the Project's *Statement of Principles*.

Quite simply, the *Project's* stated purpose is to increase US interests abroad and take whatever risks are necessary in order to ensure the strengthening of US global power:

> We aim to make the case and rally support for American global leadership.... We [need]...a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States' global responsibilities....: we cannot safely avoid the responsibilities of global leadership or the costs that are associated with its exercise....If we shirk our responsibilities, we invite challenges to our fundamental interests.[50]

What the newly "elected" and tenuous US administration required in 2000, was an opportunity to begin acting on these policies; a means for justifying military action abroad and increasing defense spending. In 2001, Bin Laden's face—while not regressing to conspiracy theories of Bush and Bin in cahoots over the September 11th massacre—provided this opportunity. Whatever the President and his Intelligence people did or did not know prior to September 11th, 2001 regarding Al Qaeda's intentions, they moved like a well-oiled machine after the fact: proposing action in Afghanistan, dropping hints about Iraq, and quashing any debate by labeling dissenters as un-patriotic and un-American. George W. can be on the receiving end—the classically passive position—in that second coupling with Osama because he, along with his administration, chooses to be there, turning shit into gold like any good political alchemist.[51]

In each of these photographs, the absence of Woman is noteworthy. Recalling Eve Sedgwick's classic discussion of homosocial desire, these images depict at once an economy of power relations between men, and an intense homophobia.[52] At the same time, their potential for subversiveness lies in the ambiguous relations between the two men in the second image. Sedgwick writes: "To draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual…"[53] The photograph is not captioned; its openness to multiple readings are, as Barthes has argued, what make it a photograph.[54] Where these images depart from Sedgwick's analysis, however, is in their total exclusion of women. No longer even objects for

exchange in these photographs, women are nowhere to be found.[55] Their absence begins to take on a sinister edge when considered alongside post-September 11th attempts by the US government to fortify its boundaries, and to render its insides pure of viral (terrorist) influences.

Osama and O.J. Simpson Source: http://www.bobaugust.com/osamabinladen.htm

In my discussion of the John Walker Lindh photos, I alluded to US anxieties over white womanhood and black sexuality historically played out through the lynching and castration of black men. O.J. Simpson, one of the most notorious black men of the twentieth century, is famous precisely for his alleged violence against a white woman.[56] In this odd coupling of bin Laden with O.J., the US obsession with the black man's penis returns with a vengeance. At stake in this anxiety? The terror of miscegenation. Racial mixing signified not simply the loss of racial purity, but

also the threatened loss of supreme white political and economic power through Emancipation and Reconstruction.[57] As Robyn Wiegman argues, lynching was fundamentally about maintaining clear borders:

> Operating according to a logic of borders—racial, sexual, national, psychological, and biological as well as gendered—lynching figures its victims as the culturally abject—monstrosities of excess whose limp and hanging bodies function as the specular assurance that the racial threat has not simply been averted, but rendered incapable of return.[58]

The most common rationalization for the castration and lynching of black men was the accusation of rape. The threat to white womanhood functioned as the ultimate emblem of border dissolution: biracial babies contaminate the (pseudo) purity of the white race.[59] As Hazel Carby notes, however, the charge of rape "became the excuse for murder." White women were not only unnecessary to the accusation process, but rape became a mere linguistic event—resurrected in speech if necessary, but otherwise secondary to the white male mob's desire to violate the black man.[60]

Similarly, the white woman is an absent presence in the mug shots of O.J. and Osama. Perhaps dead like Nicole, she haunts them from the grave as a silent but symbolic object, her image interpreted by the living (media) as a cry for justice. By equating the two men, their crimes likewise intermix, and Osama is suddenly pictured as a black man threatening the racial purity of white America through his violent

sexuality. In this spectral representation of American womanhood as white, murdered, and absent, all women—of colour and Caucasian—are obliterated from the national community. Replicating Freud's exile of women from the tribe in *Totem and Taboo*, the dream which comes into focus through all these images of men is profoundly fascist.

As a theory of community, Freud's totemism envisages a patriarchal-cum-fraternal organization based around taboo and the expulsion of women. Once the brothers have killed the Father out of jealousy for his access to the women, their guilt provokes two actions: "They revoked their deed by forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father; and they renounced its fruits by resigning their claim to the women who had now been set free."[61] Women, in other words, are perceived as a threat to the newly formed community and must be resisted, rejected, and banned at all costs.

Klaus Theweleit identifies this desire for the eradication of woman as the foundation of fascism: "[r]eal men lack nothing when women are lacking....Relationships with women are dissolved and transformed into new male attitudes, into political stances, revelations of the truth path, etc."[62] Women's bodies reproduce, are penetrated, and dissolve boundaries between male and female; all the conventional tropes of Woman as grotesque flesh return in the fascist dream which aspires above all to clean lines and solid borders. Add to that the potential for miscegenation through racial mixing, and Woman becomes the threat to national purity par excellence: "It is this physical power, this potentiality of transmission,

confusion, and reproduction through actual bodies, that could break down all boundaries and thus disrupt social order in the most fundamental fashion."[63] And so, in all these virtual imaginings of encounters with Osama, Woman disappears from view while a fascist call to order and totalitarianism emerges as a quest for domestic control and global conquest.

The Spectacle of Woman

And yet, the imaginary eradication of women from visual fantasies is not reflected in the non-virtual universe; women are still very much a part of the current wars and their controversies. But those women who have come to signify in this pseudo war on terror—such as Jessica Lynch and Lynndie England—do so within the limits of carefully mobilized narratives, narratives which bolster the US administration's xenophobia and its fascist dreams of pure power. Narratives which also, curiously enough, recall earlier formulations of power and gender in certain writings from post-World War I Germany: the Freikorps novels

Roughly spanning the years between 1918 and 1945, the Freikorps writings are "autobiographies, novels, and eyewitness accounts by men in the Freikorps circles" as well as novels written about them by outsiders.[64] The Freikorps were the volunteer armies who, following World War I, fought the German revolutionaries and the communist threat both within and outside of Germany.[65] As a whole, these texts are set in the time period between November 1918 and November 9, 1923, the years

in which "the German revolution was defeated and the cornerstone laid for the subsequent triumph of fascism."[66] What emerges from these texts is an unmistakable ambivalence towards women: "They vacillate between intense interest and cool indifference, aggressiveness and veneration, hatred, anxiety, alienation, and desire."[67] These narratives of the Freikorps soldier males—men who became central SA members and often key operatives within the Third Reich—provide a window into the fantasies of fascism, fantasies which consistently reflect an obsession with women's bodies. Their depiction of female characters is therefore crucial to any analysis of fascism and femininity.

Theweleit describes three different types of women in his analysis of the Freikorps novels:

> those who are absent, such as the wives and fiancées left behind, and generally unnamed and unnoted…; the women who appear in the imagination and on the battlefront as "white nurses," chaste, upper-class German women; and, finally, those who are his class enemies—the "Red women" whom he faces in angry mobs and sometimes even in single combat.[68]

While the white nurse figure approaches absence—she is usually nameless and often disembodied—her chastity renders her textual presence as non-threatening as a woman's presence is capable of being in these narratives. By contrast, the threat posed by the Red woman—so named because, as Theweleit suggests, Woman comes

to be equated with the threat of Communism—is figured precisely through her hypersexualization. She is a proletarian whore, a monster who "swears, shrieks, spits, scratches, farts, bites, pounces, tears to shreds; who is slovenly, wind-whipped, hissing-red, indecent; who whores around, slaps its naked thighs, and can't get enough of laughing at these men."[69] In these fantasies, the Red women are the focus of the Freikorps' bloody fury. But sexuality, for both white and red women, is the determining factor in their representations as threatening or (relatively) benign.

Enter Jessica and Lynndie. Private First Class Jessica Lynch, the homegrown American hero, is famous for being captured in late March, 2003 during the Iraq invasion, and later rescued by US forces from the *Saddam Hussein General Hospital* in Nassiriya. Describing the US soldier as "spunky," "blond and waiflike," her ordeal has been written and re-written since the story first broke in *The Washington Post* on April 3rd, 2003. This first account details Lynch's brave refusal to go down without a fight: "[she] fought fiercely and shot several enemy soldiers…firing her weapon until she ran out of ammunition….Lynch…continued firing at the Iraqis even after she sustained multiple gunshot wounds and watched several other soldiers in her unit die around her…. She was fighting to the death…She did not want to be taken alive."[70] Next came accounts of Lynch's mistreatment in prison. Stories of her being "slapped around" in hospital were soon overshadowed by allusions to a horrific rape, one specifically including anal penetration.[71] As details clarifying her capture emerged—her gun jammed and she never fired a single shot—the story of her rape continued to play despite conflicting reports and staunch denial from doctors in the Iraqi hospital.[72]

Lynch claims not to remember a thing. In an interview with Diane Sawyer, she states: "When we were told to lock and load that's when my weapon jammed…I did not shoot a single round…I went down praying to my knees. And that's the last I remember."[73] Nevertheless, the narrative of the rape continues to circulate, emphasizing at the same time her broken body and vulnerability prior to rescue:

> The scars on Lynch's battered body and the medical records indicate she was anally raped, and "fill in the blanks of what Jessi lived through on the morning of March 23, 2003…The records do not tell us whether her captors assaulted her almost lifeless, broken body after she was lifted from the wreckage, or if they assaulted her and then broke her bones into splinters until she was almost dead."[74]

From stoic soldier going down fighting, to vulnerable, "crying all the time" waifish victim, Jessica Lynch became the perfect image of the white, civilized woman in need of rescue from the evil Arab Other.[75] As Melisa Brittain argues, the media's emphasis on Lynch's whiteness and feminine vulnerability exemplify the continued circulation of both sexist and colonialist rhetoric in the US's ongoing war campaigns: "In narratives of Lynch's ordeal, her heroism pivoted on her vulnerability as a white woman in the face of Arab masculinity, and the reiteration of the trope of interracial rape was utilized by members of the media eager to naturalize US military violence during a moment of crisis."[76] Relaunching imperialist discourses of the primitive Other, Lynch's capture and rescue provided the US media—and administration—with a perfect public relations story to boost waning support of the war at home.[77]

The significance of Lynch's whiteness in the compulsive repetition of this discourse emerges even more forcefully when we remember that two other American women were present with Lynch during the attack: Shoshana Johnson, an African American soldier, captured and wounded by gunshots through both legs, and Lori Piestewa, a Native American soldier killed when a rocket propelled grenade hit the Humvee she was driving.[78] Unlike Lynch, neither of these women has been lauded as an American hero, nor have they had television miniseries produced about them, nor have biographies been written of their lives. The overwhelming absence of concern for their stories, in relation to the media frenzy over Lynch, marks the pivotal role played by the imagination of American womanhood—read white womanhood—as dangerously imperiled by terrorism. Similar to the slippage from Osama to O.J.outlined above, here we have the imagination of a horrific violation perpetrated by barbaric "fiends" against a good (white) American, while the memory of other American women is violently effaced.

The real Jessica Lynch, of course, is nowhere to be found in all these narratives. It is her iconicity—and the spectacle generated through this iconicity—that signifies. The actual occurrence or non-occurrence of the rape is of little import; it is the *image* of violation, and of her rescue, which matters.[79] As Rey Chow argues, fascism must be understood in terms of spectacle; it is a technology of projection founded in love and idealism: "it is a search for an idealized self-image through a heartfelt surrender to something higher and more beautiful."[80] Fascism, in other words, is not simply about the annihilation of something deemed ugly and impure,

but about the visualization and quest for an ideal. Hence the significance of film to Hitler's Germany.[81] Thus far, the role of the mainstream media has been to contrast idealized images with horror stories of the evil terrorist Others identified by the US government. Giving face to the God-given mission in Iraq, the production of Lynch as an American hero provided a powerful ideal image for the watching public to latch on to, and the government to use as a defense for their invasion.

Lynch's image became purified through all this writing, as though the repeated textual violations of her body, adamantly insisting on one of the US's most feared and taboo sex acts, anal penetration, enacted a kind of Sadeian purification by fire.[82] In the end, she has been produced as a woman worth saving: a pure, white, helpless victim. Giving the US military a much needed image-boost of its own during an obviously failing operation, Lynch became an imagined mirror for her country, reflecting its dominant values and ideologies so that its inhabitants could, in turn, imagine themselves in her place: "[But] the public knows what the cynics won't acknowledge: Lynch indeed is a 100 percent American hero because she's become a living symbol of every man and woman in uniform who answered their country's call, and left family and friends to do their duty."[83] As Chow argues, the spectacle of fascism is not simply about projection, but also about introjection—about internalizing the idealized image: "If individuals are…'interpellated,' they are interpellated not simply as watchers of film but also as film itself. They 'know' themselves not only as the subject, the audience, but as the object, the spectacle, the movie."[84] Jessica's capture was narrated as though America herself had been

captured, and her rescue—filmed live by the military and re-broadcast countless times—was celebrated as the recovery of this America, recasting that old trope of the nation as a woman's body in need of protection. Despite reports that Iraqi soldiers had abandoned the hospital, and that medical administrators had been trying to release Lynch to the Marines for days, US Special Forces stormed the hospital in a night raid, putting on a spectacular show for the folks at home.[85] Needless to say, Shoshana Johnson's rescue, which took place eleven days later, was not filmed. Her face was not suitably heroic for the American military.

The violence which purifies Lynch's image thus serves to reinforce the purity and righteousness of the American campaign to "liberate" Iraq, and the US violation of another sovereign body gains an additional reason for being: justice, liberty, democracy and Jessica Lynch's body. At this point, Lynch's body paradoxically dematerializes and she becomes, like liberty and democracy, one more powerful abstraction worth fighting for. In this sense she resembles both white and red women from the Freikorps novels. Her purity, which emerges out of sexual violence, must be carefully managed and constantly reproduced.[86] Jessica Lynch's role is to be violated, repeatedly violated, in order to give the men back their soldier duties: to fight and rescue the white women from the evil horde.

Unlike Jessica, Lynndie England is no angel. The American private infamous for her role in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, England functions more as waste receptacle for all that the US administration would like to deny regarding its role in perpetrating violence and terror. Despite the acknowledged existence of thousands of

photographs, as well as video footage—implying the involvement of far more than a few rogue soldiers—Lynndie England has become the dominant figure, thereby redoubling her role in the images as perverse dominatrix. Since the scandal first broke, images of male soldiers involved in the abuses all but disappeared from view, while the now infamous photographs of Lynndie holding a leash attached to a naked prisoner, and laughingly pointing at the genitals of a hooded prisoner, became the identifying images of things gone terribly wrong in Iraq. As Brittain argues, however, the mainstream media's emphasis on England provided another brilliant public relations opportunity for the US administration:

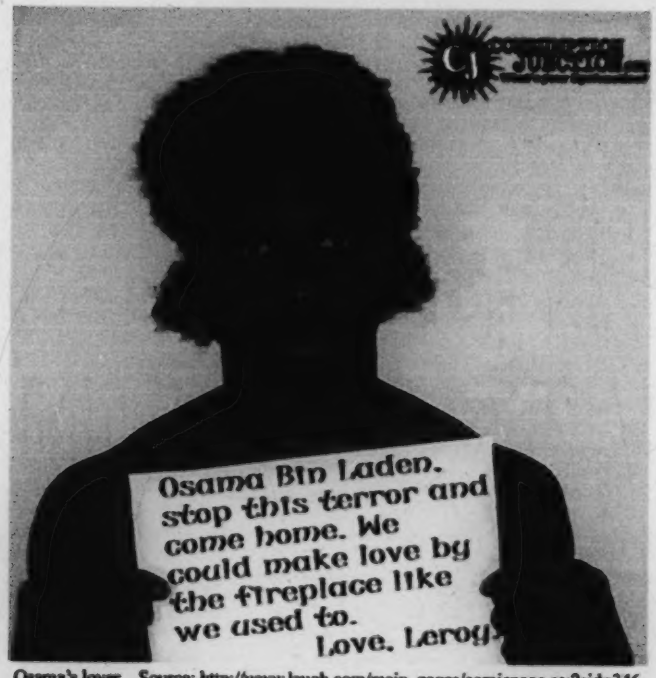
> The images of Arab men being broken, subdued, shamed and disciplined by a white woman allow for the realization of the 'American dream' of the total demasculation and humiliation of Arab men, while white masculinity remains outside the category of 'depravity'.... [and diverts] attention away from the larger question of who is ultimately responsible, and on to a discussion of the problems of a 'sexually deviant' woman.[87]

Operating as a screen deflecting attention away from the deeply troubled campaign, and, of course, from the continued absence of Osama, the Lynndie England saga plays out its fascist spectacle in remarkably similar fashion to Lynch's story. Resembling Theweleit's Red Woman, England's role as phallic female is to horrify, and to be subdued. Her apparently deviant sexuality—the press has given overwhelming attention to her pregnancy, her less than respectable boyfriend, her

tendency not to be in her bed at curfew, etc.—marks her as abject, and thus as an interior exteriority ostensibly rejected by the nation, but salaciously embraced for every detail she provides of illicit activity.[88] The spectacle of England enables the media and its public to consume the image of perversion while pretending to reject it.

England's repeated comparison to Jessica Lynch—Margaret Wente dubbed her the "Anti-Jessica Lynch" —underscores the uncannily similar role both women have been made to play in the US's official narrative of the war on terror.[89] White womanhood, in dangerous contact with dark-skinned men, require rescue and disciplining by white soldier males. Reiterating again the narrative I outlined above in my discussion of Osama images, historical American anxieties over race and miscegenation continue to resound powerfully: the masculine other is identified as the source of ultimate perversion, white womanhood is always at risk or potentially threatening, and those Other women, the ones who continue to *not* signify as either women or human, are simply erased from the dominant account altogether.[90] Whether at home or abroad, sex, or the anxiety over racially pure heteronormativity, has emerged as the primary carrier of meaning—the narrative which most powerfully drives home the urgency of the ongoing US campaigns against its Others. Both Lynch and England, seemingly polarized according to that old virgin/whore trope, perform the same sexualized role: they each give face to the glory and supremacy of US power.

The Projection is on Continuous Loop: Here's the Queer Black Man Again



Osama's lover Source: http://www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.as;?cid=346

Back home, in America, a heartsick queer black man writes a pleading letter to Osama. Or, uncannily reproducing mug shot conventions, a black male prisoner (of love) holds up a sign of identifying marks. One more for the Rogues Gallery of illicit faces. Exposing bin Laden as the linguistic trace he is, the coupling of sign and image link historical terrors from inside American borders, with contemporary horrors of what lies outside: the African-American male and the Middle Eastern terrorist are partnered in their threat to a strong and pure America. They are the waste products of a nation, whose images here serve to reiterate the administration's policy

regarding the eradication of excess, and underscore its contention that the need to identify and discipline all bodies cannot be postponed.

Interestingly, bin Laden is not called to *America*; he is called *home*. Collapsing the borders between domestic and foreign, inside and outside, the elusive head of terrorism operates according to postal logic; disseminated everywhere, the viral entity threatens American integrity without ever being traced, pinned down, or detected.[91] No matter, for Bin Laden has long since stopped functioning as anything more than a screen for US desires, a focal point for the public eye to study while war campaigns and civic violations proceed virtually unchallenged. As Bush himself remarked in response to a question concerning the unsuccessful hunt for Osama, "I rarely think of him anymore..."[92]

Lynching Osama
Source: http://www.khmerclub.com/Funnypix/12103/OsamaBin.jpg

Slight of Hand: The West goes East

In the ass-fucking fantasies which have circulated far and wide since September 11th, America the retaliator manages to fuck the evil terrorist while remaining the heroic–hetero male. Never perp nor perv, America puts Osama squarely on the bottom in this homo-revenge-scene, pricked, poked, and burning in hell by a straight and just nation.

Osama t-shirt Source: Unknown Internet Site

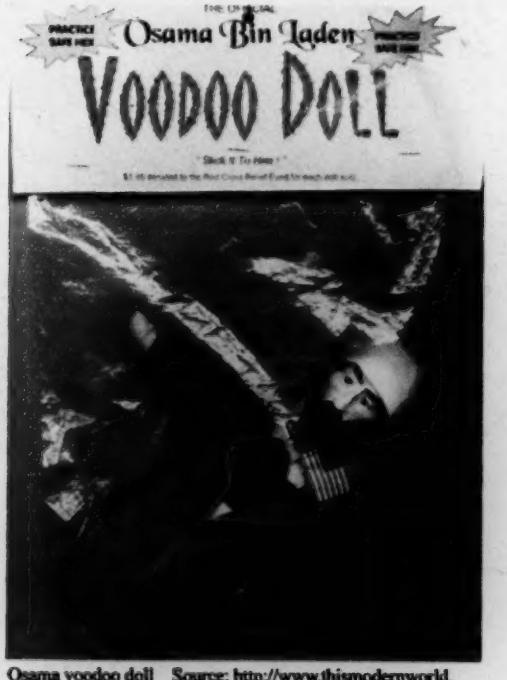
From grocery store tabloids, to countless Internet sites, to the vaunted *New York Times*, the category *Terrorist* has been imagined in surprisingly similar ways. Osama, as the face of terrorism today, is a brown-skinned queer who likes it up the butt, or stuck in a goat's hole. Terrorism wears a turban, smells bad, has black lovers,

and lives to screw white power.[93] And yet, despite all these visual clues, the US Administration tells us that the terrorist lives an elusive and shadowy existence. We can never be certain of his whereabouts, and so the technologies of surveillance discussed in the previous chapter are rationalized as a means of locating this paradoxically excessive and invisible figure. But there is another way of killing Osama in this age of SMART missiles and satellite imaging: through magic…

Animism, as Freud writes, is "the doctrine of souls, and, in its wider sense, the doctrine of spiritual beings in general."[94] Freud draws on classic anthropological works by E.B. Tylor and James Frazer in order to examine the significance of animism to psychoanalysis, a concept which has been linked from its discursive beginnings with notions of primitivism.[95] Focusing specifically on animism's relation to magic, Freud notes that "[m]agic has to serve the most varied purposes—it must subject natural phenomena to the will of man, it must protect the individual from his enemies and from dangers and it must give him power to injure his enemies."[96] Plugging into neural pathways, the primitive requires only his will and imagination to deploy this magic against an enemy; spatial proximity to the figure in question is redundant. Naming this magical thinking a type of "omnipotence of thought," Freud describes both forms of this practice—imitative and contagious magic—as manifestations of the animistic soul.[97]

Imitative, or sympathetic, magic works by constructing a copy of the adversary and then damaging it in lieu of the actual enemy body: "One of the most widespread magical procedures for injuring an enemy is by making an effigy of him

from any convenient material... Whatever is then done to the effigy, the same thing happens to the detested original..."[98]



Osama voodoo doll Source: http://www.thismodernworld.com/media/gra/binladen.jpb

The "Official" Osama Voodoo doll, colourfully packaged and even ethical—it promises to send a portion of all proceeds to the Red Cross. In an ironic reversal, those purchasing the Osama dolls become practitioners of primitive magic, and, thanks to the technologies of mass production, there really is no limit to the amount of damage consumers can hope to inflict through this imitative version of wish-fulfillment.

The message, *Practice Safe Hex*, marks an undeniable fetishism—an erotic charge results from pricking the evil doll. *Stick it To Him* anywhere you like. Libidinally driven now, the anti-Osama-poker enters the same realm as Osama the sexual animal. Additionally, the obsession with violating and controlling bin Laden's body, seen over and over again in these doctored images, foregrounds the primacy of rape as a technique of war. Using the pin of Old Glory, the owner of the Osama-doll relies on penetration for maximum mutilation.[99] Re-enacting imitative magic to perfection, the West goes primitive with these dolls, and aptly illustrates Horkheimer and Adorno's discussion of Fascism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the West does not annul magic, but represses it. Its modes of return are deeply invested in power.[100]

But primitivism is not the West's only fate here; for, according to typical Freudian logic, children and neurotics are the primary practitioners of contemporary magic. Writing that "[c]hildren are in an analogous psychic situation," Freud argues that "[i]t is in obsessional neuroses that the survival of the omnipotence of thoughts is most clearly visible and that the consequences of this primitive mode of thinking comes closest to consciousness."[101] Sold in brightly advertised packages, these dolls are just that: dolls. Objects for child's play.[102] Not only are consumers infantilized, but they are also distracted from their worries and fears, allowing the fathers of the nation to get down to the business of war. The technique has proved successful in the military as well. Combining the logic of mug shots with old card games like *Memory*, coalition forces produced a now famous deck of fifty-five playing cards

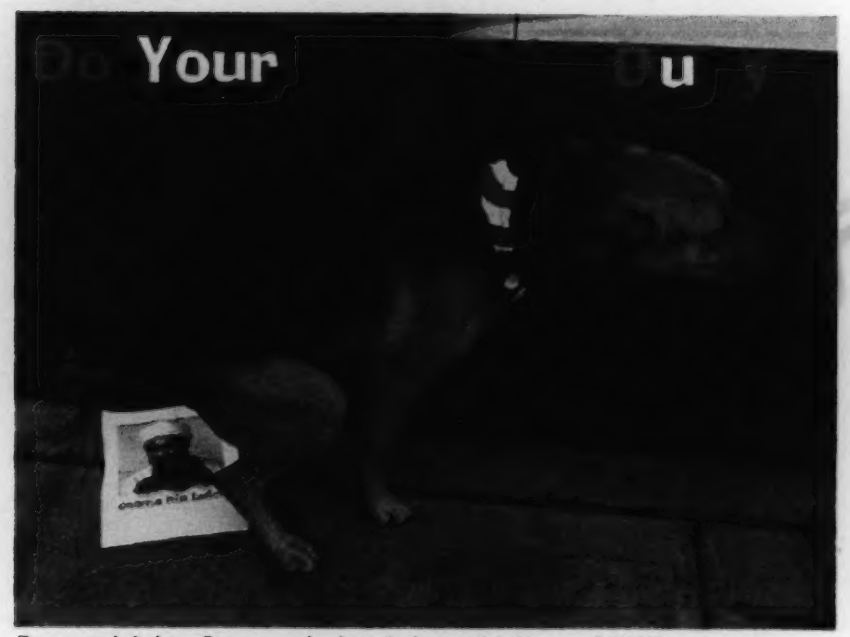
bearing the faces of the "'most wanted' members of Saddam Hussein's regime" in order to aid soldiers deployed to Iraq identify their targets.[103]

Osama pin cushion Source: Defunct Website

Osama target doll
Source: http://www.vudutuu.com/2osamadoll.gif

The second type of magical thinking—contagious magic—requires an actual piece of the enemy: hair, nails, effluent, etc. Once in the primitive's possession, he inflicts damage on to the object and "[i]t is then exactly as though one has got possession of the man himself; and he himself experiences whatever it is that has

been done to the objects..."[104] Significantly, contagious magic also makes use of naming. As Freud writes: "In the view of primitive man, one of the most important parts of a person is his name. So that if one knows the name of a man or of a spirit, one has obtained a certain amount of power over the owner of the name."[105] And we have come full circle. Giving face and giving name turn out to be nothing more than modified forms of primitive magic reiterating the laws of paternalism and totemism in the desire to forge a powerful national community of members scoping out, and scooping up, terrorists.



Do your patriotic duty Source: www.laugh.com/main_pages/comicpage.asp?cid=346

[1] Quoted in Puar and Ray, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag,"146.
[2] Commenting on the unsuccessful search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, cited in: Lapham, "Buffalo Dances," 11.
[3] Gordon, "The Fragile City,"16th September, 2001.
[4] Or the Pacific, depending on how one conceives sides and divisions in this geopolitically partitioned Occidental and Orientalized world.
[5] Agamben, *The Coming Community,* 86.
[6] Rest in the Derridean sense of "restante": remainder, waste, ashes, leftover…See, especially, his work in *Cinders*.
[7] Bird, "The mote in God's eye," 84.
[8] Ibid., 87.
[9] Ibid., 87.
[10] Her Majesty's Government, "Responsibility for the Terrorist Atrocities in the United States, 11 September 2001."
[11] Reiterating again the complex relations between public and private—Osama's involvement may be a matter of public record, but the details proving this involvement remain concealed in the name of security.
[12] Roy, "The Algebra of Infinite Justice," 29 September, 2001.
[13] The face has fascinated many writers . Bataille calls it a "scandal" (The Solar Anus, 8); Benjamin suggests that all the world "could be thought of as a 'face' to be read for its inner 'soul' (Taussig, 230); and Deleuze discusses it as a combination of micro-movements and reflection (*Cinema I*, 87-88). Levinas' articulation of the encounter with the face of the Other—the recognition of the Other as irreducible and impenetrable—as the embodiment of the ethical relation par excellence holds particular interest for this discussion. Presenting a theory for engaging without attempting to master the Other through defacement, Levinas suggests a mode for being *otherwise* in our relations. See *Otherwise than Being, Or Beyond Essence*.
[14] Taussig, *Defacement*, 3.
[15] Fabian, *Time and the Other,* 106. This is only one example of the primacy of vision within Western traditions of thinking; many others abound. I have already touched on Foucault's discussion of vision and power through panopticism. Psychoanalysis, of course, has been obsessed with vision from Freud onwards. The castration complex originates when the little boy sees the absence on the mother's body; Lacan's subject comes into its own through the mirror stage; Irigaray's critique of Plato depends upon the ironic use of a speculum's mirror…Apart from psychoanalysis, Frances Yates has documented the classical interdependence of memory and vision in *The Art of Memory*. Benjamin, of course, imagined history as a photographic process, imbricated with presence and absence, shadows and fog. In his articulation of dialectics, image becomes the mode of articulation: "It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill." ("N: On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," 462) In a certain way, the whole of this dissertation concerns itself not only with the primacy of vision to North American culture, but also to what Eric Fischl referred to in a personal interview as a general state of "visual illiteracy" within this culture.
[16] Fabian writes: "Such a theory [of visualism] in turn encourages quantification and diagrammatic representation so that the ability to 'visualize' a culture or society almost becomes synonymous for understanding it." (106)
[17] Horkheimer and Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 184.
[18] Ibid., 184.
[19] Smith, *American Archives*, 5.
[20] Ibid., 14.
[21] As Allan Sekula writes in "The Body and the Archive":

> The clearest indication of the essential unity of this archive of images of the body lies in the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century a single hermeneutic paradigm had gained widespread prestige. This paradigm has two tightly entwined branches, physiognomy and phrenology. Both shared the belief that that surface of the body, and especially the face and head, bore the outward signs of inner character. (10-11)

[22] Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography." **pp???**

[23] Following Eduardo Cadava's translation of Benjamin's famous essay, I substitute the word "technical" for "mechanical." See Cadava's *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History.*

[24] Smith, 70.

[25] As Richard Bolton argues, "It was once said that photography would serve democracy, helping to construct a modernist polis by providing a means of speech accessible to a wide number of participants. But photography also offered a means of social control." (*The Contest of Meaning*, xi).

[26] Smith, 71.

[27] Ibid., 85.

[28] President George W. Bush in "President Unveils 'Most Wanted' Terrorists." For the current list, visit the FBI's *Most Wanted Terrorists* website, at: http://www.fbi.gov/mostwant/terrorists/fugitives.htm.

[29] Ibid. Bush proceeds to explain, "I say 'the first 22' because our war is not just against 22 individuals. Our war is against networks and groups, people who coddle them, people who try to hide them, people who fund them. This is our calling. This is the calling of the United States of America, the most free nation of the world." As so many critics have already commented, Bush's continued deployment of fundamentalist rhetoric and assertion of theological right is uncannily similar to Osama bin Laden's extremist quest in the name of Allah. See, for example, Tariq Ali's book, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*.

[30] See the report released on October 4th, 2001, by Tony Blair's government, which uses a list of Bin Laden's prior crimes in order to document probable culpability for September 11th, 2001. Available online from *The Guardian* at: http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Politics/documents/2001/10/04/terrorism.pdf

[31] Brown, "Thing Theory," 7.

[32] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 112. Reference to the anthropologist is neither gratuitous nor anachronistic, for we in North America have been trained in lay ethnographic observation since at least the latter half of the nineteenth century when the miscegenation of racialist sciences, criminology, and photography began to produce an atmosphere for public surveillance of Otherness. I address this further down.

[33] Ibid., 113.

[34] Driscoll, "Reverse Postcoloniality," 69. See also Paul Gilroy's analysis of the Lindh episode in "Diving into the Tunnel: The Politics of Race between Old and New Worlds, "2002.

[35] See Derrida, "...That Dangerous Supplement...," especially pp. 144-45.

[36] Many of these photographs have been collected in: Allen, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, 2000.

[37] A number of critics have written on this history. See, for example: Carby, "'On the Threshold of Woman's Era,'": Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," 330-343; DuCille, *The Coupling Convention*, 1993; and, Wiegman, *American Anatomies*, 1995.

[38] Additionally, As per Foucault's analysis of the disciplines, the representation of medical authority advertises the location of power; their visual emasculation serves to reify US power and control over the Oriental fanatic. See both *Discipline and Punish*, and *The Birth of the Clinic*.

[39] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 3.

[40] Many studies have been published documenting the emergent racialist sciences of the nineteenth century. From phrenology, to psychoanalysis, to gynecology, and others, character and nature were long believed to be indicated by surface affect or physiognomic characteristics. Additionally, the science of criminology saw the light of day in this epoch, and was engaged with all of these sciences, as well as photographic portraiture, from its beginnings. A small selection of important work on these

subjects: Sekula, "The Body and the Archive"; Wiegman, *American Anatomies*; Smith, *American Archives*; Sante, *Evidence*.

[41] Taussig, 3.

[42] Puar and Rai have written a fascinating essay, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," whose argument parallels that of this chapter. They write:

> ...we make two related arguments: (1) that the construct of the terrorist relies on a knowledge of sexual perversity (failed heterosexuality, Western notions of the psyche, and a certain queer monstrosity); and (2) that normalization invites an aggressive heterosexual patriotism that we can see, for example, in dominant media representations....The forms of power now being deployed in the war on terrorism in fact draw on processes of quarantining a racialized and sexualized other, even as Western norms of the civilized subject provide the framework through which these very same others become subjects to be corrected. (117)

[43] See, for example, Kevin Glynn's *Tabloid Culture* (2000).

[44] See Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of carnival and the grotesque in *Rabelais and His World*.

[45] Driscoll, "Reverse Postcoloniality," 81. Additionally, Driscoll cites sales data detailing that rags like the *Globe*, the *Weekly World News*, and the *National Enquirer* are among the "most widely purchased news sources in America." (81)

[46] My insistence on the phrase *giving face*, purposefully alluding to the expression *giving head*, reflects the libidinal economy of this process. The hypersexualized images I include in this chapter provide visual illustrations of how naming and giving face to the enemy work through a kind of sympathetic magic. Additionally, "giving," as I suggested in Chapter 2, is an ultimately ambivalent operation connoting both present and poison, goodwill and indebtedness. The debts and ills which have been and continue to be visited on thousands of people around the world since this *War on Terror* began have yet to be accounted for.

[47] While I do not dispute the gravity of charges leveled against bin Laden, I do feel it necessary to draw attention to the attendant ironies of this designation being made by US power, with its particularly heinous history of state-sponsored terrorism. See Noam Chomsky's *9/11* for one account among many of this history. It is, moreover, the technologies deployed in his representation which I am interested in; not his relative guilt or innocence.

[48] Bataille's fascinating narratives of these two organs—solar anus and pineal eye—deftly collapse Enlightenment borders dividing sight from smell. In the process, the human face takes on a modified anality. Writing in "The Jesuve":

> The pineal eye probably corresponds to the anal...conception that I initially had of the sun....[When man began to stand erect] The human anus secluded itself deep within flesh, in the crack of the buttocks, and it now forms a projection only in squatting and excretion. All the potential for blossoming, all the possibilities for the liberation of energy, now under normal conditions found the way open only toward the superior regions of the buccal orifices, toward the throat, the brain, and the eyes. The blossoming of the human face, gifted with the voice, with diverse modes of expression, and with the gaze, is like a conflagration, having the possibility of unleashing immense quantities of energy in the form of bursts of laughter, tears, or sobs; it succeeded the explosiveness that up to that point had made the anal orifice bud and flame. (74, 77)

[49] Freud, *Pre-Psycho-Analytic Publications and Unpublished Drafts. Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 268-69. See also Freud's analysis of the Rat Man in Volume 10 of the Standard Edition (pp247-48); and *Civilization and its Discontents*, 36-46.

[50] Excerpted from *Project for the New American Century*, "Statement of Principles," http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm

[51] See Dominique Laporte's fascinating study of this process whereby "shit" is recycled and returned to the operations of cultural production: "Shit comes back and takes the place of that which is engendered by its return, but in a transfigured, incorruptible form. Once eliminated, waste is reinscribed in the cycle of production as gold." (*History of Shit*, 15-16)

[52] As Sedgwick notes in *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire*:

> "Homosocial" is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with "homosexual," and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from "homosexual." In fact, it is applied to such activities as "male bonding," which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. (1)

[53] Ibid., 1.

[54] In "Rhetoric of the Image," Barthes writes: "all images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others." (39)

[55] Paraphrasing Gayle Rubin, Sedgwick recounts: "patriarchal heterosexuality can best be discussed in terms or one or another form of the traffic in women: it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men." (26)

[56] Or to re-state: the fascination lies in the fact that O.J. is largely believed to have gotten away with murdering a white woman—surely an unusual feat for a black man in the US.

[57] Robyn Wiegman provides an important analysis of lynching practice in *American Anatomies*:

> In the turn toward lynching...in the post-Emancipation years, we might recognize the symbolic force of the white mob's activity as a denial of the black male's newly articulated right to citizenship and, with it, the various privileges of patriarchal power that have historically accompanied such significations within the public sphere....In the lynch scenario, the stereotypical fascination and abhorrence for blackness is literalized as a competition for masculinity and seminal power. (83)

[58] Ibid, 82.

[59] The attendant ironies of this post-Emancipation frenzy—that the prevalence of miscegenation between white slaveowners and black slave women prior to Emancipation are a well documented fact—bear repeating. See, for example, Wiegman and Carby. Hazel.

[60] Discussing the work of Ida B. Wells, Carby notes:

> Wells demonstrated that, while accusations of rape were made in only one-third of all lynchings, the cry of rape was an extremely effective way to create panic and fear....The North conceded to the South's argument that rape was the cause of lynching; the concession to lynching for a specific crime in turn conceded the right to lynch any black male for any crime... (335)

[61] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 178.

[62] Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 33, 35.

[63] Chow, "The Politics of Admittance," 61. More specifically, white woman embodies this threat; for as Chow proceeds to argue, "this construction, because it admits women *as* sexuality and nothing more, leaves no room for the woman of color to retain her membership among her own racial/ethnic community." (67)

[64] Theweleit, 23.

[65] Ibid., ix.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 24.

[68] From Barbara Ehrenreich's foreword in *Male Fantasies*, xiii.

[69] Theweleit, 67.

[70] Schmidt and Loeb, "'She was fighting to the death," 3 April, 2003.

[71] See, for example, Brittain, "Benevolent Invaders," 8-12.

[72] Russell, "Update 1," 10 November, 2003.

[73] *ABC News*, "Too Painful," 6 November, 2003.

[74] Colford and Siemaszko, "Fiends Raped Jessica," 6 November, 2003.

[75] Priest, Booth and Schmidt, "Bone-Crushing Injuries in Crash During Ambush," 17 June, 2003.

[76] Brittain, 8.

[77] As Christopher Hanson writes:

> Neither a link between Saddam and Osama bin Laden nor Iraqi weapons of mass destruction materialized. Although the Pentagon drummed the idea that our mission was to liberate the Iraqi people, many Iraqis saw our troops as unwelcome. But before doubts could fester, the

> Lynch rescue story broke. It was a p.r. windfall for the military, the first successful rescue of U.S. POW behind enemy lines since World War II. The announcement was a godsend to the press corps....Reporters at last could deliver the straightforward, emotionally fulfilling saga of good beating evil that America expects. (Hanson, "American Idol," 59)

[78] See Brittain, 9; and Davidson, "A Wrong Turn in the Desert," 27 May, 2004.

[79] Recall Hazel Carby's discussion of rape as a linguistic event for the justification of lynching: a similar move happens here.

[80] Chow, "Fascist Longings," 26.

[81] See, for example, Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* and *Triumph of the Will*, both celebrations of idealized bodies devoted to the State.

[82] As Brittain also notes,

> The suggestion that Lynch was sodomized works in a similar way to suggest the 'illicit' and 'unnatural' penetration of the US by Iraqis who resist the occupation by US-led forces. The trope works, then, through the discourses of race, gender, and heteronormativity, to resurrect the image of Arab masculinity as violent and perverse, and to reduce the female soldier to a vulnerable body that must be repossessed in a manner that reasserts the phallic power of white masculinity. (12)

[83] Brown, "Where's Jessica?," 82.

[84] Chow, 30.

[85] See: Russell, 10 November, 2003; and, Hanson, 59.

[86] Her image became so sacrosanct that not even *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt would touch it. Despite the acknowledged existence of semi-nude photos depicting Lynch "romping with two men at Fort Bliss, Texas, where she was stationed before shipping off to Iraq earlier this year," her image of a good girl triumphs. (Keating, "Larry Flynt Protects Nude Photos of Jessica Lynch," 11 November, 2003) Flynt purchased the photographs, and decided not to run them, stating that she had been made into a pawn "in the U.S. government's 'cynical attempt to create a "hero" who can "sell" the war to the American people.'" No one seems to have suggested that this "romping" with American soldiers in any way tarnishes her purity. (Ibid.)

[87] Brittain, 16.

[88] See, for example: Parker, "Soldier England Described as Troublemaker," 5 August, 2004; and, Staff writers, "Prison Scandal Soldier," 25 October, 2004.

[89] Wente, "Iraqi Horror Picture Show," 8 May, 2004. The irony of the "Anti-Jessica remark," given the existence of semi-nude photos of Lynch, underscores the discursive work being performed throughout both the mainstream and so-called alternative media: Jessica Lynch is the pure victim.

[90] I mean, of course, not simply the Shoshana Johnson's and Lori Piestewa's who are discounted as women and American, but also the Iraqi women, and Afghan women, who are either dismissed or reduced into simple monolithic categories: disappeared into abstraction. Susan Sontag's linkage of the Abu Ghraib images with lynching photography makes the connection to American anxieties with black masculinity explicit. Lynching photographs were "trophies" designed to record "a collective action whose participants felt perfectly justified in what they had done. So are the pictures from Abu Ghraib." ("Iraqi Picture Show," 23 May, 2004)

[91] Woman, again, is nowhere to be seen.

[92] Quoted from Michael Moore's film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

[93] None of this is new, of course. Similar narratives regarding Saddam—Sodom—Hussein have circulated across and through all media for years. Among the more famous examples: makers of the television show *Southpark* produced a movie, *Bigger, Longer, Uncut*, featuring Saddam and Satan as lovers; the *National Examiner* (especially 12 March, 1991) tabloids have run multiple features on Saddam as a cross-dressing, S/M practicing, pedophiliac homosexual; and Thomas Friedman, long-time *New York Times* journalist, wrote an article entitled "'Sodom' Hussein's Iraq" on 1 December, 2002.

[94] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 94.

[95] See, for example, Tylor, E.B., *Primitive Culture*, 1891; and Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough*, 1911.

[96] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 98.
[97] Ibid, 107.
[98] Ibid, 99.
[99] Think of it as metonymic for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. And in light of recent photographs emerging detailing US treatment of Iraqi and Guantanamo prisoners, the doll replicates an uncanny doubling signifying far more than the ironic replication of the unlocateable Evil Enemy.
[100] They write: "The purpose of the Fascist formula, the ritual discipline, the uniforms, and the whole apparatus, which is at first sight irrational, is to allow mimetic behavior. The carefully thought out symbols…the skulls and disguises, the barbaric drum beats, the monotonous repetition of words and gestures, are simply the organized imitation of magic practices, the mimesis of mimesis." (184-85)
[101] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 104, 108.
[102] A few years ago, Polish artist Zbigniew Libera produced his Lego concentration camps. Evoking commonplace phrases like "war games," these toys raise complex and fascinating questions about soldiers, infantilization, and violence.
[103] Kozaryn, "Deck of Cards Helps Troops Identify Regime's Most Wanted," 4 April, 2003.
[104] Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 102.
[105] Ibid., 102.

Putting Mourning to Work: Sentimental Sadism

Stop making sense...[1]
–Talking Heads

Freud tells us that mourning is work. More precisely, he describes grief repeatedly as "the work of mourning," and explains "the work which mourning performs" as the process by which the ego gradually splits its attachment from the lost object.[2] In Freud's earlier writings, mourning is a finite process that, once completed, permits "the ego [to become] free and uninhibited again."[3] When mourning goes wrong, it does so because it refuses to finish the job, becoming addicted instead to re-membering the loss of the other. This perversion of the normal work of mourning results in melancholia, a complex which "behaves like an open wound."[4] The ego feeds on loss, and desires nothing other than to "incorporate this [lost] object into itself," thereby setting off a perpetual attachment to absence within.[5] For Freud, melancholia differs from mourning in that its work is never done.

As Judith Butler has argued, this early distinction between mourning and melancholia becomes complicated as Freud continues to work through his own concepts. Referring to his later writing in "The Ego and the Id," she asserts that mourning in a sense becomes subsumed by melancholia:

> If in "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud thought that one must sever one attachment to make another, in *The Ego and the Id*, he is clear that only upon

> the condition that the lost other becomes internalized can mourning ever be accomplished and new attachments begun.[6]

Derrida has taken this further still, suggesting that the work of mourning is an interminable condition or operation; that all life mourns ceaselessly and without end.[7] For Derrida, mourning's work challenges us to acknowledge the alterity of the lost other as we incorporate their images and memories within. It is an operation which seeks not to reduce or erase the other, but to let the other be in their absence, and to let ourselves be traced through with death, with absence, and with irreducible difference. All of which begs the question: how are we to understand the concept of work in the context of interminable mourning?

"Work" typically signifies according to classical utilitarian convention. Work is productive; goal-oriented and useful, its purpose is to enable the continuation of the species. All work requires a degree of consumption—humans require sustenance in order to continue producing and reproducing. As Bataille argues, two different forms of consumption are operative in modern Western societies. Utilization of "the minimum necessary for the conservation of life and the continuation of individuals' productive activity" represents the first form.[8] The second type, characterized by uselessness, he names: "unproductive expenditure....activities which, at least in primitive circumstances, have no end beyond themselves."[9] Significantly, Bataille lists mourning as one example of non-utilitarian expenditure.[10] Mourning contributes nothing towards the continuation of the species; it is non-productive and anti-utilitarian. Mourning, in other words, is the wasteful consumption of our energies.

How can mourning be both work and waste? If it is a process which does not contribute to the economic and political progress idealized within modernity, then the work of mourning must be envisioned as a kind of anti-work. Derrida articulates this kind of non-work as "a work working at its own unproductivity."[11] Characterized by renunciation—by the resistance to transform mourning into useful activity—the work of mourning resists its transformation by will into force: "here comes a work without force, a work that would have to work at renouncing force, a work that would have to work at failure."[12] Failure, that is, in the sense of modern utilitarian discourse. Consequently, this profoundly radical renunciation constitutes a refusal to engage in the quest for mastery and power which has preoccupied the West for as long as history has existed. Far from referring exclusively to the grieving process one undertakes in the face of a specific death, mourning names a principle of resistance to participate in the will to power, a will which includes the pursuit of comprehension, possession, and identification I have been addressing throughout this present work.

In Giorgio Agamben's terms, the work of mourning embraces impotence.[13] Despite its capacity for becoming-meaningful, or mastering loss through action, mourning remains committed to passivity—to *not* finding a purpose. In the wake of 9/11, mourning was not allowed to remain passive. Forced into action, the work of mourning was harnessed to the cause of making sense of what happened.

Making Sense

Over the course of November, 2001, *The New York Times* published five digitally altered versions of paintings by Norman Rockwell, using them as

advertisements for the newspaper's ability to engage meaningfully with the attacks and their aftermath.[14] Drawn in part from his *Four Freedoms*, a World War II series first published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the doctored Rockwells enable identification with images of pre 9/11—pre-*collapsarian*—American innocence. Positioned immediately following the *Times'* special section on Grief, dedicated to running photographs of the Trade Center victims, the doctored Rockwells were accompanied by the slogan: *Make Sense of Our Times*. Playing on *Times* as signifying both the newspaper and the current historical (ie: post 9/11) epoch, the ads capitalized on grief as a selling mechanism.[15]

Rockwell's *The Four Freedoms For Which We Fight* series was first published in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1943, two years after their initial rejection by the US government (figs. 1-4).[16] Inspiration for the series undoubtedly came from President Roosevelt's speech in January, 1941 to Congress, known now as the "Four Freedoms" speech. Attempting to garner support for intervening in the war effort, Roosevelt invoked "four essential human freedoms," all of which, he argued, had been placed in jeopardy by the governments of the Axis nations: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.[17] His articulation of these basic freedoms gathered momentum in the ensuing months, and operated as a touchstone in numerous addresses to both foreign and domestic audiences.[18]

While initially "[justifying] increased financial support of Britain," the Four Freedoms served an important disciplinary function for the American people. Funneled down through official rhetoric, the freedoms were further disseminated

through "speeches, essays, stories, paintings, conversations, press reports, and generally into public awareness."[19] Magazines as diverse as *Parents Magazine, Catholic World, Education,* and *Annals of the American Academy* all published articles concerning the Four Freedoms. Artists also joined the fray, producing various works based on the freedoms. In an anecdote which hauntingly evokes Walter Benjamin's discussion of the aestheticization of politics by fascism, sculptor Walter Russell recounts a meeting with Roosevelt during which "the President suggested to me that through the medium of arts, a far greater number of people could be brought to understand the concept of the Four Freedoms."[20] Significantly, the US government itself was responsible for a portion of this mass dissemination, commissioning "murals, photographs, paintings, pamphlets, woodcuts, and displays....[as forms] of public outreach."[21] By the time Rockwell's illustrations appeared in *The Post*, therefore, the Four Freedoms were already functioning as recognizable statements of American democracy and patriotism.

Fig. 1: *Four Freedoms*
Source: http://wesofdesign.com/americanicons.htm

Fig. 2: *Four Freedoms*
Source: www6.ocn.ne.jp/~fleur/blessed.html

Fig. 3: *Four Freedoms*
Source: artscape.net/VAREVIEWS/NRockwell.shtml

Fig. 4: *Four Freedoms*
Source: http://wesofdesign.com/americanicons/rockwell/htm

"Freedom of Speech," featuring a male speaker in a schoolroom surrounded by listening townspeople, was the first of Rockwell's freedom series to be published. Invoking democratic ideals through its representation of a town meeting, the image is just one example of what critics have labeled Rockwell's homogenization of American experience.[22] Although he is noted for attempting to engage the issue of race in paintings such as "The Problem We All Live With," white, middle class heterosexual families abound in his work. Nostalgia, harmony, and idealization are themes frequently attributed to his particular vision of America. The remaining three "Freedoms" illustrate these themes.

In "Freedom from Fear," two children are tucked into bed by their mother. The father, participating only as an observer of this night-time ritual, holds a newspaper in his left hand; the front page headlines read: "Horror," "Bombings," and, "Women and Children Slaughtered by Raids."[23] Emphasizing at once American security and European insecurity—the image was intended to invoke the bombing raids raging across the Atlantic—"Freedom from Fear" paints a picture of geographical thanksgiving: thank God we're safe over here.[24] "Freedom from Want" makes this thanksgiving explicit, picturing a joyful white family seated around the dinner table. Fulfilling their traditional gender roles, the mother brings the turkey to the table so that the father can carve.[25]

Finally, "Freedom of Worship" pictures several faces of the devout either bowed in prayer, or solemnly attentive to an unseen sermon. Note the sole black face in a sea of white worshippers—perhaps Rockwell's attempt to imagine desegregated religious practice? Despite the image's caption—*Each According to the Dictates of*

His Own Conscience—each figure appears engaged in specifically Christian devotion; the freedom to worship not yet pictured across faiths. Rockwell's idealized freedoms imagine a serene and peaceful life, in which families (read: white and heterosexual families sanctified both legally and religiously) are safe from the terrors of war, and secure from all physical needs. Their initial appearance in *The Saturday Evening Post*, each placed opposite a text by a well-known author decrying the evil Axis powers and elevating the glories of American freedoms, was met with tremendous acclaim.[26]

Not long after *The Post* ran the four images, the US administration became interested in the fund-raising potential they saw in Rockwell's work. Reversing their earlier refusal, the government chose *The Four Freedoms* in 1943 as "the official posters for the second War Bond Loan Department." (figs. 5-6)[27] In addition to the four million posters printed by the Treasury department, both Rockwell and the original paintings went on tour for the bond drive in the spring of 1943. The drive raised nearly $133 million.[28] Freedom, in other words, had become an object for purchase. Moreover, as Rockwell's original title of the series indicates—*The Four Freedoms For Which We Fight*—freedom requires war. As an abstract concept put to work—ideologically quilted as Zizek might say—"freedom" is specifically made to signify American democracy and white, heteronormative bourgeois values threatened by the evil Axis Other.[29] Rockwell's paintings, in other words, *made sense* of Roosevelt's aspirations.

Fig. 5: Rockwell's War Bonds
Source: http://www.classbrain.com/artteenst/publish/article_101.shtml

Fig. 6: Rockwell's War Bonds
Source: http://www.jcs-group.com/military homefront/ww2home.html

Making Sense: 2001

Appearing in *The New York Times* on November 2nd, 2001, the first altered Rockwell is based on *Freedom from Fear* (fig. 7).[30] Here, the father still watches as the mother prepares their children for bed, but this time his newspaper has been modified. Generating a clever mise-en-abŷme, the father holds a copy of *The New York Times* September 12th, 2001 edition, featuring a photograph of the burning Trade Center and the headline "U.S. ATTACKED HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR."[31] The slogan, *Make Sense of Our Times*, runs on the bottom left of the page. Capitalizing on the nostalgic power of Rockwell while promising readers the salve of elucidation, the ad paints a picture of America as a family under threat, selling *The Times* as the path to understanding.

Make sense of our times

The New York Times

Expect the World

Fig. 7: *New York Times* Freedom from Fear Source: *New York Times*, 2 November, 2001

Descending into a vertigo of semantic self-referentiality—use our paper to understand our paper—the byline also invites an immediate identification with an entity labeled *our*. *Make sense of our times* thus refers both to the editors as nominal representatives of the newspaper, and to a more general reading public, grouped together under the umbrella *our*. In other words, Rockwell can help an identifiable reading community—*us*—to understand *The New York Times'* reporting of the times in which *we* live. As Francis Frascina notes, one of the new realities these Rockwells help its reading public understand is that: "'freedom from fear' now included the proposed need for 'homeland security' and the transportation of fear to those perceived by the United States as enemies."[32] Once again, boundaries between "us" and "them" are reiterated, disseminated this time through a powerful icon of nostalgia and "American" family ideals.

Type the following query into your search engine: *Why do they hate us so much?* If using Google, you'll receive hundreds of hits, all referring to the same desperate post September 11th context.[33] The linguistic slippage between us and US(A) provides an elegantly visual example of the collapse in logic exhibited by framing the question in this manner. As Neil Smith argues in his discussion of nationalism and terrorism, the question performs a series of misidentifications which only perpetuate reductive communitarian logic:

> Behind the undefined "they" lurks a racist pigeonholing of Arabs and Muslims, of course, but less obvious is the radical homogenization implied by "us." The "us" here assumes a seamless if simplistic correspondence between the people of the United States

> and the U.S. government that under any other conditions would be thought ludicrous.[34]

Like the *You never walk alone* and *I pledge allegiance* postcards, the Manichean rhetoric of Us and Them recapitulates a communitarian myth which in turn enables equally reductive explanations for why the attacks occurred, and what the appropriate responses ought to be.

Using another digitally altered Rockwell painting—"Teacher's Birthday"—to aid its readers in their quest to make sense of it all, *The New York Times* participated once again in this mass education of the American public.[35] In the original Rockwell, the viewer is positioned in the back of a grade-school classroom, watching a birthday celebration unfold (fig. 8). In the foreground, children sit dutifully at their desks, with their backs to the viewer. The teacher stands in the painting's background, next to a blackboard covered with wishes for a Happy Birthday. In the version published by *The Times* on November 9th, 2001, the blackboard is partially covered by a map of Afghanistan (fig. 9).[36] A lesson so simple, a child can understand.

Readers are positioned as children, learning that the map of Afghanistan provides answers to the confusion of September 11th. Accomplishing a deft infantilization of its readers, *The Times'* deployment of this particular Rockwell raises a number of issues concerning the representation of children. Typically objectified in political rhetoric as "the future," children are seen, among other things, as images of hope, repositories of energy to be harnessed for productive work, and future consumers of goods waiting to be captured by the gods of corporate advertising.

Here, a complex substitution and doubling take place, whereby adult readers become children (being fed so much pap in history class), and children come to resemble future soldiers receiving a lesson in geopolitical relations.[37] Finally, making sense of our times—a task easily set to children—requires the docile passivity figured in the bodies of these students.[38] By emulating the receptacle-like attention of Rockwell's pupils, readers will undoubtedly make the grade and discipline themselves to identify Afghanistan as the seat of the terror.

Fig. 8: *Happy Birthday Miss Jones*
Source: http://www.buffalogames.com/HTML%20pages/Rockwell.html

Fig. 9: *New York Times* Happy Birthday Miss Jones
Source: New York Times, 9 November, 2001

Although these modified Rockwell ads are situated in the context of mourning—they appear immediately following the *NY Times* "Portraits of Grief" section, a special daily insert dedicated to publishing photographs of the deceased—their location after grief suggests that mourning leads to national discipline. The vulgarity of these advertisements derives not from their commodification of Rockwell, but rather from their attachment of mourning to an object lesson—to make it work for comprehension of something inherently traumatic and without reason. Barthes tells us that nothing much can be said either about trauma, or about a traumatic image: "trauma is a suspension of language, a blocking of meaning....the traumatic photograph...is the photograph about which there is nothing to say."[39] Similarly, Derrida suggests that the work of mourning is precisely about the impossible incorporation of absolute loss—not its domestication and re-deployment into the language of conquest and geopolitics. What remains after trauma is not language, but shell shock. Its attachment to productivity represents the ultimate perversion.[40]

Ironically, the visualization of enemy territory, captured within the frame of a (modified) Rockwell, and within the frame of the *New York Times*, makes sense of Derrida's concept of the interior exteriority. A kind of virus necessary to the functioning of the system, the map of Afghanistan works to shore up the identity of the good as it gives face to evil. However, by imagining evil in terms of a map rather than the face of the supposed enemy—bin Laden—the image effectively abstracts the civilian lives at stake in "Operation Enduring Freedom," the official name for the US

invasion of Afghanistan. Once again, "freedom's" attachment to work—to a military operation—exposes the quilting of this abstract signifier through the web of nationalist American rhetoric as it erases the face of the other. While the modified Rockwell works to distance the reading public from self-examination by presenting a cartographic profile of the problem—and the consequent solution to the problem: a place far away from here named Afghanistan—readers are nevertheless invited to put themselves in the picture. To identify, in other words, with the precipitating event and thereby with the governmental solution of invasion. Terrorism, against all logic and credibility, is deftly located far away from the here and now of America, while it is internalized and held close within the bodies and minds of listening students.[41]

Identification

Identification with the event becomes a means of making sense of it—of crafting narratives of explanation. Judith Butler identifies the private, personal narrative as one moment of slippage in the post-9/11 world:

> In the U.S., we start the story by invoking a first-person narrative point of view, and tell what happened on September 11th. And it is that date, and the unexpected and fully terribly experience of violence that propels the narrative.... We have to shore up the first-person point of view, and preclude from the telling accounts that might involve a decentering of the narrative 'I' within the international political domain."[42]

The danger of these narratives, she warns, lies in their potential for unchecked narcissism, an all too real consequence of the U.S. government's official policy of retaliation: "We relegate the United Nations to a second-order deliberative body, and insist instead on American unilaterialism."[43] But the first person narrative also hovers dangerously at the brink of sentimentality, perilously close to becoming kitsch. When mourning becomes kitschified, totalitarianism is not far behind.

In *The Art of the Novel*, Milan Kundera describes kitsch as "the need to gaze into the mirror of the beautifying lie and to be moved to tears at one's own reflection."[44] Kitsch reflects a profound narcissism—a desire to insert oneself into a historical or otherwise significant moment. First person accounts enable those not present at the scene of the trauma to identify with the event, and thereby place themselves into a grander historical narrative, much like we remember where we were when O.J. Simpson was chased down a Los Angeles highway, or my parents' generation remember what they were doing when J.F.K was shot. These narratives are further bolstered by pilgrimages to the site, during which time the acquisition of souvenirs and memorabilia become another means of identification. When President Bush and Mayor Rudy Giuliani called on the nation shortly after September 11th to visit New York and spend their money shopping, the tourist industry responded with reams of collectibles for sale. Now, visitors to Ground Zero, and New York more generally, not only fulfill a national duty through their economic support, but are also enabled to purchase a piece of the event, like modern-day relic-hunters.

Souvenirs are vessels of narrative potential. A kind of Ariadne's thread, they are traces linking the possessor to a lost origin; connection to that origin is

accomplished through the construction of narrative: "The souvenir must be removed from its context in order to serve as a trace of it, but it must also be restored through narrative and/or reverie."[45] Shrinking the distance between collector and event, souvenirs have "as their vocation the continual re-establishment of a bridge between origin and trace."[46] This desire for *nearness*—for the reduction of distance—is tantamount to a desire for possession. Souvenirs "[represent] distance appropriated....through the souvenir, [the subject] possesses the lost and recovered moment of the past."[47]

Taking home a piece—the bits, remains, mors—of the trauma, tourists incorporate September 11th into their lives in classic melancholic fashion: they identify with the lost object (the towers, the victims, American innocence...) through a kind of ingestion.[48] As Freud notes: "identification is a preliminary stage of object-choice...in which the ego picks out an object. The ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it."[49] While Freud often wrote about this ingestion in a literal sense—for instance, the totem meal, or the hysteric giving up food—melancholic incorporation assumes multiple forms.[50] Souvenir and relic-hunting constitute one such means of identification.

Fig. 10: Unlocking door
Source: Author photo

It's heavier than one might expect. Cheap, certainly; but not weightlessly so. Miniature monument—a tiny replica-cum-key chain (fig. 10). Now reduced to pocket-size, the two towers have become an aid to holding the keys which open the doors of everyday life. A clichéd metaphor for memory purchased for two dollars down at Ground Zero. Unlocking doors to house, car, office, the returned tourist is thrown back, momentarily, to a trip taken and a time which has since receded in the face of everyday life. The key chain souvenir functions now as evidence: an object proving I was there.

The bottom section, a rectangular pedestal upon which the towers stand, resembles the base of a human tombstone complete with epitaph. One side simply reads NEW YORK; the other side mourns more specifically:

In Memory of
WORLD TRADE CENTER
1973-2001

Just as any mother, child, father, or widow might inscribe the gravestone of a lost love. A short life, a loss so tragic only ritual words will do, although ritualized text never begins to accomplish the commemoration it desires. The massive buildings are reduced to a miniature grave marker; a tomb uncannily housing nothing at all—certainly not the usual bodily remains those accustomed to Western funerary traditions have come to expect. It is, moreover, a moveable tombstone, but one marking journeys to and from the site, rather than the buried presence of victim remains. On the bottom, MADE IN CHINA is stamped into the metal.

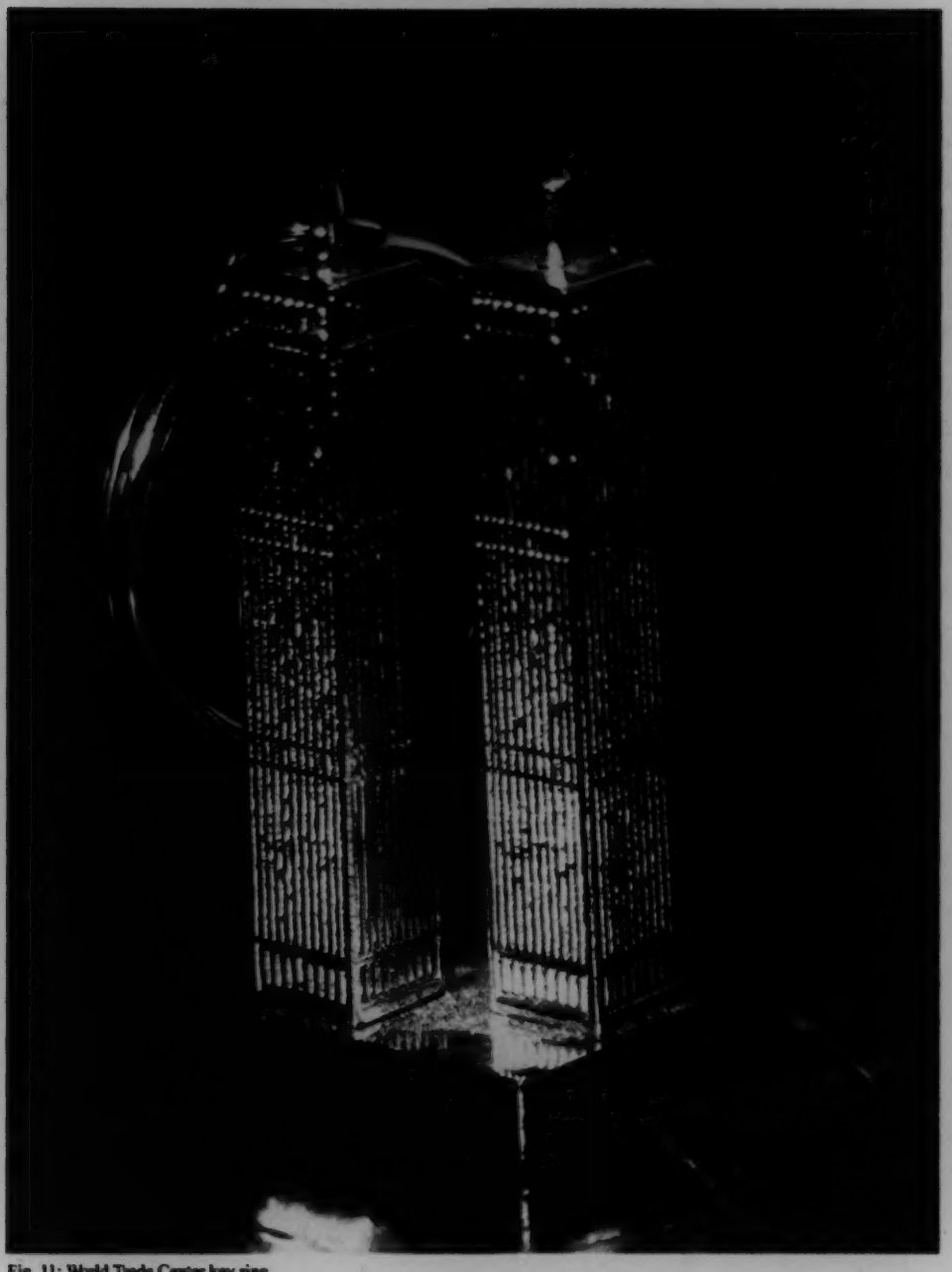


Fig. 11: World Trade Center key ring
Source: Author photo

I bought it at Ground Zero, in March, 2003

Uncanny superimposition whereby the time of the trauma and the time of the tourist commingle, becoming equally significant to memory, and perversely, inextricably intertwined. Nostalgia, with its wistful memories, is essentially history without guilt.[51] Emptied of any sublime horror, this little tombstone waits on the vendor's table to be picked up and filled by its tourist-collector with new, domesticated memories. Through possession of my souvenir, I forge a connection to the tragedy. Now, I have a story to tell. *I was there* become words belonging to both survivor and tourist. As Benjamin writes: "The mémoire volontaire…is a registry providing the object with a classificatory number behind which it disappears. 'So now we've been there.' ('I've had an experience.')"[52]

The key ring's suitability as narrative springboard begins with its identification of the story's origin *as* the death of the towers. Just as the tourist uses the trinket to re-trace a private voyage, erasing the event's absolute alterity in the process, so too the reproduction of the towers as both present and past—they stand upon their own epitaph—invites the reading that all that has transpired on the global scene since, can be traced back to the attacks of September 11th, 2001.[53] Producing their own hauntology, the dead towers operate as an absent presence whose mere existence *as such* explains the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the nation's domestic policies of surveillance and deportation.[54]

You know, whenever you go on a trip, you've got to bring home a T-shirt.[55]

–Ground Zero Vendor

But souvenirs enable far more than individual connections to a traumatic event; they propel group formations, what Freud describes as the binding relations between individuals who detect a significant commonality between them:

> …[identification] may arise with any new perception of a common quality shared with some other person who is not an object of the sexual instinct. The more important this common quality is, the more successful may this partial identification become….the mutual tie between members of a group is in the nature of an identification of this kind, based upon an important emotional common quality; and we may suspect that this common quality lies in the nature of the tie with the leader.[56]

Not only did both Bush and Giuliani's approval ratings shoot up immediately following the attacks, but the media perpetually reiterated how unified the nation had become since September 11th. Americans, we were told, were banding together in this time of crisis in order to focus on the nation's new God-given mission: the fight against terror. This imagined banding together, reminiscent of Freud's repeated insistence on identification as a specifically *binding* force, is constructed as a positive, nation-building experience.[57]

In an interview with *BBC Newsnight*, however, CBS journalist Dan Rather referred to this binding patriotism as a particularly oppressive force: "It is an obscene comparison…but you know there was a time in South Africa that people would put flaming tyres around people's necks if they dissented. And in some ways the fear is that you will be necklaced here, you will have a flaming tyre of lack of patriotism put around your neck."[58] One souvenir in particular exhibits the linkages between private narratives, group formation, and the violence they engender: the T-shirt.

Within a week of the attacks, vendors in Union Square and Chinatown offered another article for purchase: T-shirts, emblazoned with the US flag and the twin towers, displayed this slogan:

America Under Attack.

I can't believe I got out[59]

Appearing on tables within days of the 11th thanks to the work of underground suppliers and manufacturers, sales were immediately brisk:

> "They are kind of funny. They appeal to my sick sense of humor," said Greg Gomez, who purchased several for his relatives in Illinois at a bargain price of 4 for $10. "Everyone at home wants a t- shirt, but I will not wear one. It just kind of shows how everyone in America will find a way to make a quick buck, even off tragedy."[60]

For four dollars, the "real" survivors are no longer distinguishable from the tourists; the experience of trauma has become a fashion statement, something anyone can put on.[61]

Just as *America* replaces any reference either to the *World Trade Center* or to New York in the slogan, so too does the t-shirt's owner substitute for the survivor. It is of no material consequence whether the *I* in the message refers to a "real" survivor or not. As Baudrillard argues, reality has no bearing in the specularization of this event:

> For reality is a principle, and it is this principle that is lost. Reality and fiction are inextricable, and the fascination with the attack is primarily a fascination with the image....In this case, then, the real is superadded to the image like a bonus of terror, like an additional *frisson*: not only is it terrifying, but, what is more, it is real. Rather than the violence of the real being there first, and the *frisson* of the image being added to it, the image is there first, and the *frisson* of the real is added.[62]

With Superman-like logic, the survivor identity becomes merely a matter of a quick costume change.[63] In a strange twist, the tourist not only doubles as survivor, but the survivor similarly comes to resemble a tourist: their individual experiences of terror have become stories of interest to tell to a larger community: What did you see? What did you bring back? Through this slippage between survivor and tourist, the event is lifted from its specificity—a few hundred square metres of downtown New York—to a national incident: *America Under Attack*.

These uncanny survivor doubles reiterate the event's nationalization at the level of military conformity, for the T-shirt's relatively recent history begins with the army. Credited as an invention of the British navy, the T-shirt was first designed as a way to shield royal eyes from spying sailors' armpits.[64] During World War I, European soldiers wore them as underwear beneath their uniforms in order to stay warm. When Hollywood icons like James Dean began wearing the T-shirt as outerwear in the 1950's, they became associated with rebellion and anti-establishment attitudes. However, their adoption by sports teams, clubs, rocks bands, tourists, and teenagers across Europe and North America, a phenomenon which emerged during the 1960s and has not yet abated, suggests once again their functionality as *uniform*—as a visible means of identifying with a group, an idea, a nation…

Membership has its privileges, but membership has been extended in this case for the purposes of advertising communitarian solidarity. Feeding off of tragedy, the vendors of 9/11 memorabilia sell the possibility of belonging to a greater community united by disaster:

> "I wear mine to sympathize with the people who died or lost loved ones; to show that I do care," said Andrea McDougall, an immigrant from Jamaica, as a tired Fireman with dusty boots walked past. Her t-shirt featured a picture of the Twin Towers behind the Statue of Liberty with the words, "We will stay together. We will get even stronger."[65]

Sympathy becomes a means of participation. While a fireman walks by either on his way to or from the site of mass carnage, Andrea McDougall dons her own uniform as

a means of identifying with the victims and their grief—a statement of sentimental uniformity.

This is the realm of kitsch. Kitsch says: we can all be One, and be united in our common purpose. But this One is totalitarian, and it desires no less than the extermination of its foes. An impossible desire, of course, since homogeneity always requires the presence of its profane Other in order to view itself in relief.

Expressing "all that is spurious in the life of our times," kitsch is usually dismissed as a wholly derivative aesthetic.[66] Reliant upon imitation and romantic sensibility, it constitutes a "transvaluation of insincerity into sincerity, of imitation into willful repetition, and thus of forgery into an all too sincere gesture of human good will."[67] Cheap, inauthentic, and mass-produced, the so-called kitsch object is always counterfeiting something, usually sentiment. From aesthetic philosophers to contemporary critics, kitsch is often decried for this quality of artificiality.[68]

Descendents of Kantian aesthetics attempt to describe and dismiss kitsch as material objects produced in bad taste. The *OED* defines the word in these terms: "Art or objets d'art characterized by worthless pretentiousness; the qualities associated with such art or artifacts."[69] Noted art critic Clement Greenberg refers to it as "ersatz culture…vicarious culture and faked sensations."[70] Kitsch, he argues, is "the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times."[71] And yet, as Greenberg's social history of the term suggests, kitsch refers to far more than simply the mass production of cheap trinkets; it designates a dangerous political sentimentality: "The encouragement of kitsch is merely another of the inexpensive ways in which totalitarian regimes seek to ingratiate themselves with their subjects."[72]

Referring both to objects produced cheaply, and to the kinds of group identifications enabled via these objects, kitsch emerges as a powerfully pervasive phenomenon.[73]

Following Milan Kundera's thinking, the dangers of kitsch become most apparent when both senses of the term are operational; for the power of symbols, often replicated in mass-produced objects, operates concomitantly with the romantic sentimentality of kitsch:

> The feeling induced by kitsch must be a kind the multitudes can share. Kitsch…must derive from the basic images people have engraved in their memories: the ungrateful daughter, the neglected father, children running on the grass, the motherland betrayed, first love. Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch. The brotherhood of man on earth will be possible only on a base of kitsch.[74]

Kitsch enables the statement of universal community and belonging. This is the danger: the erasure of difference, the reduction of distance, and the non-recognition of the Other all have as their unspoken desire the dream of homogeneity and absolute power. A button of the towers, a t-shirt claiming American Solidarity, a coffee mug communicating with the dead, even a Rockwell image encouraging group identification…all offering a sense of participation in an event most people experienced on television from hundreds and thousands of miles away.

Out of this mass identification with and internalization of the event, violent borderlines between patriot and enemy are drawn. On September 20th, 2001, President Bush declared it was time to lay grief to rest, and pursue vengeance: "Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done."[75] Mourning translates into sentiment which translates into kitsch communitarianism, and produces a sadistic drive to annihilate those outside the group. As Freud describes, sadism is the death instinct "which has been directed outward" towards an external object.[76] Re-formulated in Bush's terms: You are either with us or against us; our grief is now being re-directed into war.

While commemorative souvenirs may seem far removed from official US policies of post September 11th justice, they enable a rhetoric of belonging, thereby enabling the mis-identification of an innocent nation forced into battle against an evil other. Moreover, as I noted in my discussion of internet images of Osama, social theory needs to consider official government policies and so-called popular or kitsch culture as interrelated phenomena. To cite Mark Driscoll's argument once more, we must "mark the seemingly instrumental suturing of the popular to the globopathic and globocidal U.S. geopolitics."[77]

One Ground Zero worker, disgusted with the Survival t-shirts, put it this way: "I'll buy one. I'll buy one and burn it. Want to burn it with me? ... They should start selling Iraqi flags. That way, people can take those out and burn them."[78] Ritual murder through primitive magic—attack your enemy by destroying the symbols it

holds dear.[79] In a deft move, Iraqi flags come to be targeted instead of (non-existent) Al Qaeda flags.[80] Public mourning of the attacks emerges as a work of communitarian desire—the formulation of a unified declaration of nationalism and consequent global purpose. Grief is subsumed under, and harnessed to the larger project of "Infinite Justice"—the original name given to "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan. The slippage from Afghanistan to Iraq cited above—a double displacement from the named but nomadic Osama/Al Qaeda enemy—unwittingly evokes the continued significance of The Gulf War to contemporary American politics.

Avital Ronell's prescient analysis of Bush senior's obsession with Saddam and the Gulf, stemming from his WW II plane crash in the Middle East and the inception of a trauma which would continue to repeat itself until he re-entered the wound with Saddam, resonates eerily here.[81] Writing that Hussein was re-made in the image of Hitler so that Bush senior could re-play the operations of 1945 in order to undo his near forty-year emasculation, Ronell argues that: "The American unconscious has everything to do with riding signifiers on the rebound which, subject as they are at times to retooling, nonetheless returns to haunt the Same."[82] When Bush Junior came to office in 2000, he was determined to pick up where Dad left off. Despite his role as Commander in Chief—the Law of the Father par excellence, *W* is doomed to remain the son. Bush Junior's Oedipal fixation on Iraq, and his desire to emasculate its leader is well-documented. Spliced into Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, President W. refers to Hussein as "the guy that tried to kill my daddy."[83]

Now, three years after the attacks in New York and Washington, the US has just reinvigorated its faltering campaign in Iraq, laying waste to Fallujah and preparing the country for its version of "democracy." *W* has gone on record to affirm his disinterest in Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. And Afghanistan? We hear very little from the US media about Afghanistan. What we do know from international news agencies suggests that the Taliban and Al Qaeda remain relatively untouched while the civilian population has been utterly devastated. Collateral damage. Faced with its own impotence in Afghanistan, the US has all but pulled out and re-focused its already stretched military powers in Iraq.

Fig. 12: Patriotic Jack o'lantern Source: http://www.carvingpumpkins.com

As so many analyses have made clear, September 11th in no way represents the origin of this supposed "War Against Terrorism."[84] Writers from Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy, to Susan Sontag (to name just a few) have indicated the long-standing problematics with US foreign policies, and the turbulence in nations which, prior to 9/11, fell under the radar of many North Americans.[85] As I argued in chapter one, the term "since 9/11" has been identified as a kind of false origin, its compulsive iteration reflecting not only the incomprehensibility of those days, but also, and perhaps more significantly, occluding an entire history of American political corruption, both foreign and domestic.

In other words, by locating the origins of all the current wars and campaigns squarely at the feet of the collapsed towers, any sense of governmental responsibility—historically speaking—is radically diminished. As Foucault warns us, we should always be suspect of so-called historical points of origin: "What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity."[86] The bedtime story and elementary school lesson provided by *The Times'* doctored Rockwells enables an erasure of history, a move perfectly in step with the identification of 9/11 as a point of origin for the ongoing "war against terror." This phrase, an abstract concept which, like freedom, has been appropriated by the US administration as their proper and god-given mission, grants them a far greater reach. While shoring up its own national identity through the work of mourning, the US government is not bound to recognize the sovereignty of other countries. Mirroring Al Qaeda's nomadology, the

American government arrogates to itself the right and responsibility to invade whenever and wherever it sees fit.

Fig. 13: Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* Source: Section of a panel from *In the Shadow of No Towers*

[1] Lyric from Talking Heads, "Girlfriend is Better," *Stop Making Sense*, 1999.
[2] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 254, 253.
[3] Ibid., 253.
[4] Ibid., 262.
[5] Ibid,, 258.
[6] Butler, "Psychic Inceptions," 195.
[7] In "Force of Mourning," for example, Derrida writes:

> ...whoever thus works *at* the work of mourning learns the impossible—and that mourning is interminable. Inconsolable. Irreconcilable. Right up until death—that is what whoever works at mourning knows, working at mourning as both their object and their resource, working *at mourning* as one would speak of a painter working *at a painting* but also of a machine working *at such and such an energy level*, the theme of work thus becoming their very force, and their term, a principle. (172-73)

[8] Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure," 118.
[9] Ibid., 118.
[10] The complete list of his examples: "luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity (i.e., deflected from genital finality)" (Ibid., 118)
[11] Derrida, "By Force of Mourning," 174.
[12] Ibid., 174.
[13] Agamben writes: "The being that is properly whatever is able to not-be; it is capable of its own impotence." (*The Coming Community*, 35)
[14] In total, three Rockwell images were digitally altered, but two of the images were published twice. I will discuss two of these images—"Freedom from Fear" and "Teacher's Birthday." The third image, based on Rockwell's 1927 painting "The Stay at Homes (Outward Bound)," is not explicitly addressed in this chapter.
[15] *The New York Times* was certainly not the only group to capitalize on the sentiment of September 11th. I referred to a few examples in the Introduction in my discussion of the Kenneth Cole advertisements. Here is one more: DKNY, another line rooted in the city—Donna Karan New York—also ran ads after September 11th. One of these photographs features a male model buttoning up his jacket as he walks a typical New York street. Flanked by a yellow cab on one side, and a construction sign on the other, a neon advertising crawl runs across a building directly behind him. The message, which extends beyond the frame of the photograph, reads: *One City One World One City One World...*
[16] At least two different explanations for this rejection exist. Michael Kimmelman recounts that "in 1942 the Office of War Information first rejected the designs...because the government's plan was to use "real artists," not illustrators, to rally the nation." ("Flags, Mom and Apple Pie," 11/2/2001) Lester Olson provides a different account, stating that "Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morganthal refused the gift [in 1941], because the Treasury did not dabble in art." ("Portraits in Praise of a People,"19). Note not only the discrepancy in dates, but also the different Departments identified as the responsibly rebuffing parties.
[17] Roosevelt, Franklin D. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 672.
[18] See Lester Olson's summation, 20-21.
[19] Ibid., 21.
[20] Ibid., 21.
[21] Frascina, "*The New York Times*, Norman Rockwell and the New Patriotism," 104-105.
[22] See, for example, an early review in *Time* magazine: "Art." 21 June (1943): 41-2; and, Greenberg, "Avant Garde and Kitsch." As Michael Kimmelman notes: "the debate about whether Rockwell was a good artist or not is as shopworn as his art." ("Flags, Mom, and Apple Pie," 2 November, 2001)
[23] Frascina, 99.

[24] It's worth noting that Rockwell was not enthralled with this painting; he later suggested it was "based on a rather smug idea" which arrogantly emphasized American safety in opposition to European insecurity. (Rockwell quoted in: Hennessy, "The Four Freedoms," 102)
[25] Apparently Rockwell had reservations about this painting as well: "He wasn't too happy with 'Freedom from Want' either, the beloved Thanksgiving scene with the family at the table ready to eat the big turkey, an image Europeans resented because it suggested American overabundance. Rockwell was sorry about that, too." (Kimmelman, "Flags, Mom, and Apple Pie")
[26] These authors were: Will Durant, Booth Tarkington, Carlos Bulosan, and Stephen Vincent Benét. (Olson, 19)
[27] Frascina, 102.
[28] Ibid., 102.
[29] In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Zizek writes: "The 'quilting' performs the totalization by means of which this free floating of ideological elements is halted, fixed—that is to say, by means of which they become parts of the structured network of meaning." (87)
[30] The *Times* ran this same advertisement again on November 4th, 2001.
[31] *New York Times*. 2 November, 2001.
[32] Frascina, 106.
[33] For a visual engagement with this parroted question, see the Art Spiegelman page from his latest book, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, a section of which is reproduced at the end of this chapter.
[34] Smith, "Scales of Terror,"102.
[35] This image first appeared as another *Saturday Evening Post* cover, on March 17th, 1956.
[36] *New York Times*, 9 November, 2001.
[37] Or else members of political youth movements in the tradition of Hitler's youth and contemporary white supremacy groups.
[38] Evoking, once again, Foucault's discussion of discipline and self-discipline in *Discipline and Punish*.
[39] Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 30-31.
[40] Here I must acknowledge Derek Sayer's as yet unpublished essay, "Silence as a Vocation—or, Whereof We Cannot Speak: Notes for the First Anniversary of 9-11." Beginning with an epigraph from Kundera, "The stupidity of people comes from having an answer to everything," Sayer challenges us to remember the unspeakability of trauma in the face of overwhelming speechmaking and debating by all sides of the political spectrum.
[41] According to US policy, Americans are never labeled terrorists, an occlusion which actively supports the Administration's rhetoric of US (the good) versus Them (the evildoers), while veiling the attacks on civil liberties daily launched against citizens and non-citizens alike. Smith details some of the ironies emerging from this erasure of the American Terrorist:

> Hence the official silence about the identity of the anthrax terrorists—presumed, like bin Laden, to have been trained by the U.S. government—which contrasts sharply with the demonization of "foreign" terrorists. From Timothy McVeigh (also trained by the U.S. military) to the Columbine high school shooters, domestic terrorists are rarely objectified as such. And why else would the White House insist, without clarification, that Charles Bishop, the Florida teenager who flew a plane into a Tampa Bay skyscraper in a "gesture of support" for bin Laden, was not a terrorist? The answer lies in the enormity of the ideological stakes: if Americans are also terrorists, why is the "war on terrorism" exclusively focused on the Middle East or against Muslims? (Smith, 106)

[42] Butler, "Explanation and Exoneration," 58.
[43] Ibid., 59.
[44] Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, 135.
[45] Stewart, 150.
[46] Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," 94.
[47] Ibid., 93-94.

[48] Some of Derrida's synonyms for the remains of death, both physical and psychological. See, for example, *Cinders*, and *Glas*.
[49] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 258.
[50] For example, see Freud's discussion of totemism in *Totem and Taboo*, and hysterical identification in "Mourning and Melancholia."
[51] Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*,688.
[52] Benjamin, "The Collector," 203-211.
[53] Emmanuel Levinas's articulation of the Other as absolute Other haunts this section. See especially his work in *Otherwise than Being, Or Beyond Essence*.
[54] On hauntology: see Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York and London: Routledge, 1994. Among other surveillance techniques adopted or in the planning stages are: *CTS*—Combat Zones that See; *TIA*—Terrorism Information Awareness; and *Lifelog*. All of these projects have emerged from *DARPA*, the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. For a basic description of these programs, see, for example: Shachtman, "Big Brother Gets a Brain," 9-15 July, 2003; and, Campbell, "Alarm at Pentagon's email snooping," 21 May, 2003.
[55] Ground Zero vendor quoted in: Yaeger, "Time in a Bottle: The Kitsch Vendors of 9-11," 9 September, 2002.
[56] Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 108.
[57] I say "imagined" because of course many dissenters, including a significant number of New Yorkers, attempted to make their opposition to the Bush Administration's aggressive reactions known. For a visual example, see the following images from *Here is New York: A Democracy of Photographs*: on p. 600, a photograph of one slogan—*Our Grief is not a Cry for War*—which circulated in the months following the attacks; p. 611captures several protest signs featuring both this slogan, and *New York: Not in Our Name*; finally, the photograph on p. 638 shows one of the many anti-war protests which took place in the city over the course of nearly two years.
[58] Engel, "US media cowed by patriotic fever, says CBS star," 17 May, 2002.
[59] Although I have no photograph to document this find, several articles online refer to these T-shirts. See, for example, Younge, "You've seen the attacks, now buy the T-shirt." 18 September, 2001.
[60] Brune, "Terror and Response," 19 September, 2001.
[61] This is the quoted price of the t-shirts in Chinatown. Depending on where they are purchased (the Village, SoHo, Uptown…the prices range from $2 to $6.
[62] Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and the Requiem for the Twin Towers*, 28-29.
[63] As Zygmunt Bauman writes: "We are just not alive; at every moment we are *still* alive. Success is always until further notice; it is never final. It must be repeated over and over again….Survival is targeted on others, not on the self. We never live through our own death; but we do live through the deaths of others, and their death gives meaning to our success: we are *still* alive." ("Survival as a Social Construct," 10)
[64] See: Gross, Stone, and Worthington, *Chic Simple: Clothes*, 39.
[65] Brune, "Terror and Response."
[66] Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 102.
[67] Binkley, "Kitsch as a Repetitive System," 140. Moreover, if automatic imitation is one marker of kitsch, then what can be said of our funeral rituals in general? From conventional epitaphic forms to ceremonial rites, it is the recognizable, imitative aspect of Western death traditions which provides a frame for processing and mourning death.
[68] Some major writings on kitsch: Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 1984; Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," 49-76; Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity*, 1987; Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, 1989; Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 1961; Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, 1991.
[69] *Oxford English Dictionary*
[70] Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 10.
[71] Ibid., 10.
[72] Ibid., 19.

[73] Discussing Russian peasants' reactions to a particularly egregious example of kitsch painting, Greenberg remarks: "It is lucky, however…that the peasant is protected from the products of American capitalism, for he would not stand a chance next to a *Saturday Evening Post* cover by Norman Rockwell. (14)

[74] Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, 251.

[75] The White House, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People." 20 September, 2001.

[76] Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," 419.

[77] Driscoll, 81.

[78] Brune, "Terror and Response." Without a doubt, outrage and disdain have been common responses to the 9/11 fare on offer down at Ground Zero:

> …They've turned ground zero into a carnival….
>
> …This is hallowed ground….It is defiling the memory of these people to allow this to continue….
>
> …It is beyond insulting to this [fire] department, to this city, to this nation to allow that to go on so close to such a sacred site. It's not going to become a mall. It's not a place to go shopping….

(from: "9/11 Profiteering At Ground Zero Called Immoral, Illegal")

And yet, remember Mayor Giuliani's call to the world to: COME SHOP. As I argued in my discussion of *Falling Bodies,* the charge of *bad taste* must always be interrogated for its latent fears and assumptions. Here, the language of the sacred and the profane operate metonymically for the bad taste of the improper. Defilement and profanation of the site are at issue; parasitically despoiling the sacred ground, cheap souvenirs are charged with perverting the mourning process. Conventional critiques of so-called *tragic tourism* (see Lucy Lippard's essay, "Tragic Tourism" in *On the Beaten Track*...) rely upon circular reasoning for its indictment of such souvenirization—the commercialization of tragedy is evil because it commercializes tragedy. But the presence of souvenirs at ground zero, and around the city, constitutes a deeply complex phenomenon which foregrounds linkages between mourning and narratives of community—read in this case in terms of patriotism or nationalism.

[79] See my discussion in chapter 3 on animism and primitive magic.

[80] Indeed, part of the continuing potency of the body known as Al Qaeda lies precisely in the absence of iconic symbolism such as colours, flags, songs…none of which can be taken up and destroyed as a vicarious attempt to wound the organization.

[81] See: Ronell, "Support our Tropes," 269-291.

[82] Ibid., 272.

[83] Moore, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, 2004.

[84] I place quotation marks around the term in order to mark what Neil Smith refers to as the fraudulent nature of this war. Referring to the ambiguities surrounding the definition of "terrorism," Smith argues that the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center have given the U.S. elite the opportunity to

> pursue a war conceived as the endgame of globalization….it is a geoeconomic war to reassert control in the only remaining region of the post-Cold War world that mounts a serious threat to the vision of neoliberal globalization emanating from New York, Washington, and London since the 1980s. Various strands of Islam represent an alternative modernity—not just vis-à-vis the United States but often against Arab states themselves—and "antiterrorism" is a convenient way of galvanizing ideology for this war. This is the real meaning of repeated calls to move on from Afghanistan, to "finish off" Saddam Hussein," attack Somalia, smash Sudan. Once again, the process of naming reflects a discursive technique of mis-identification, distracting observers from the performance of deep analysis. (Smith, 104.)

[85] Chomsky, *9-11*; Roy, "The Algebra of Infinite Justice"; and, Sontag, "Tuesday, And After."

[86] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 142.

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